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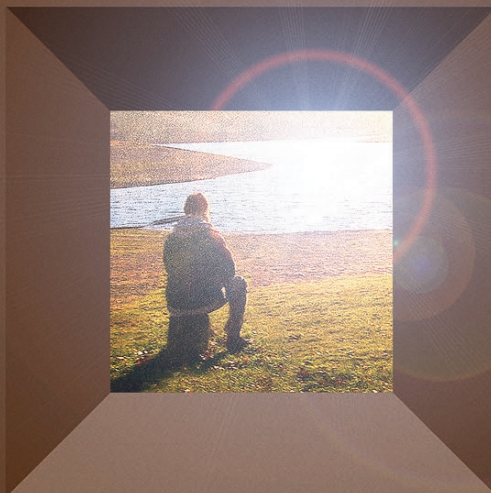
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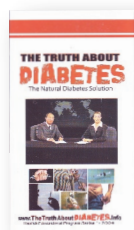
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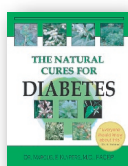
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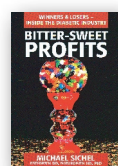
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Squamish River Valley photo by Tim G (cc)
Hijacking the commons

The glacier-fed Ashlu and Squamish rivers converge just north of Vancouver. The Ashlu features some of the finest kayaking in North America. For years local people have been standing up to protect and preserve this lovely area. But they are not alone. There are hundreds of other communities across British Columbia that have been, or will be fighting to hold onto their precious natural commons. Why are so many creeks and rivers threatened across BC now? When is a run-of-river diversion or weir not a dam? When PR documents claim only a portion of the water will be diverted, what portion are they talking about: 10, 20, 50 percent or more? We are only given reassuring language designed to keep the public asleep. BC Hydro itself, one of our most valuable and profitable public assets, is being deregulated and dismantled for private profit, as was BC Rail, BC Gas, etc. We are being "Enroned." The theft of the commons is occurring quietly and without public knowledge. If we do not know we own something, or we do not care, it is easy for some slick corporation to steal. Especially if certain provincial or federal government toadies are in on the deal and not telling voters. Hell, they are not even planning to hold a fall session of the BC Legislature for fear their trickery will be discovered. But you can read about it in the centre of this magazine. Note the patterns. Think globally, email, talk, organize and act locally to protect what is rightfully and publicly yours. Future generations will appreciate it.

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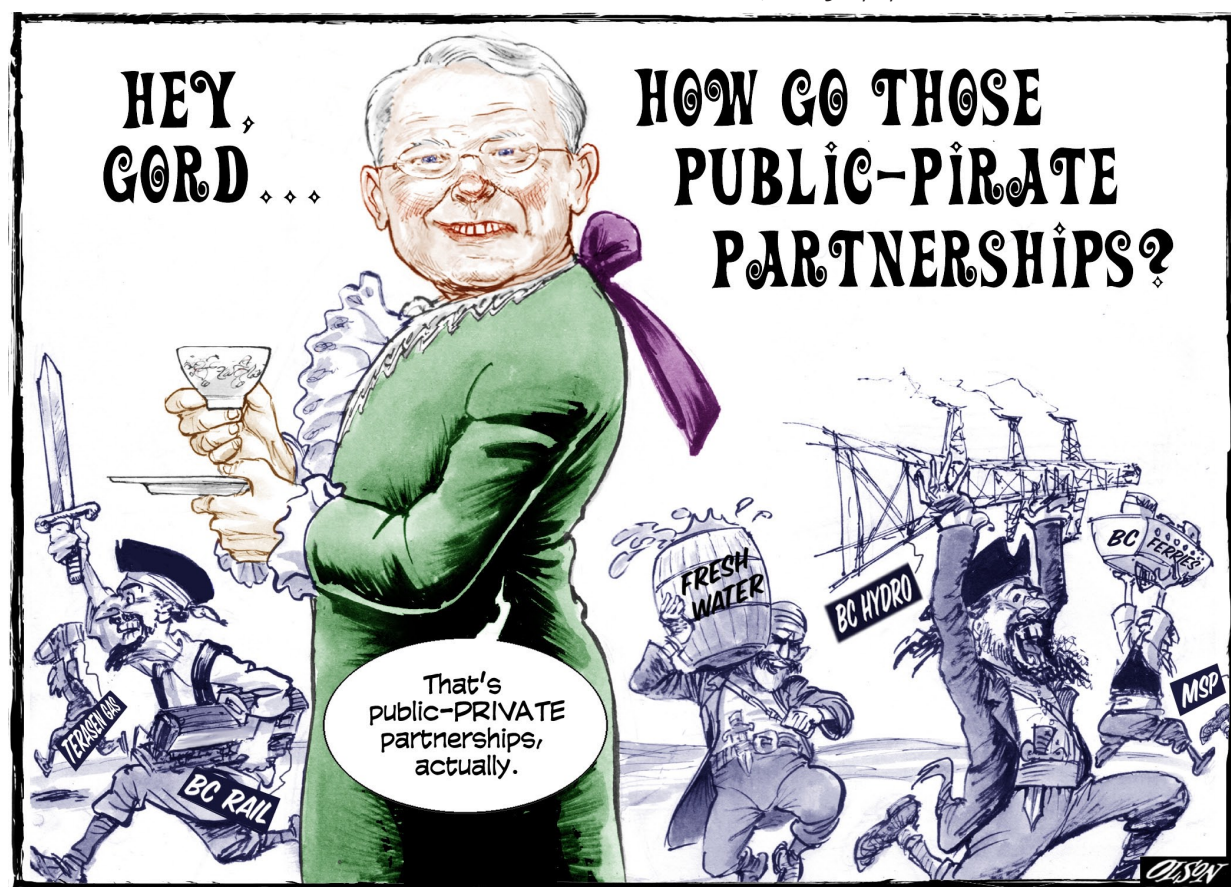
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Groundhog Day, again

From costly sports megaprojects to aerial campaigns, we've seen this movie before



BY GEOFF OLSON

Groundhog Day, one of the best film comedies of the nineties, stars Bill Murray as a cynical TV weatherman assigned to cover the annual Groundhog Day celebrations in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. In a yearly ritual he loathes, Phil Connors swallows his pride, slaps on a brave

to do is pick up the newspaper to find endless evidence.

To give just one local example, consider the latest estimate from the BC auditor general of the “true cost” for the Vancouver/Whistler 2010 Olympics: a staggering \$2.5 billion, four times the initial bid, with the

ation mechanism ever conceived is war.

For a while, it seemed we had transcended war, or at least the big, planet-sized conflicts – the stuff of Remembrance Day and *The History Channel*. From the fifties on, the masters of deterrence told us the doctrine

rendered villain for the paunchy thug Saddam Hussein, who had nothing to do with al-Qaeda or September 11. Around this time, US Vice-President Dick Cheney told the world that the war on terror “... may never end; at least not in our lifetime.” Echoing this medieval makeover for current events, George Bush recently added, “This isn’t a battle of civilizations; it’s a battle for civilization.” That’s a pretty dramatic estimate, considering you have a better chance, statistically, of being hit by lightning than being killed in a terrorist attack.

As journalist Simon Jenkins wrote in a recent issue of the *Guardian*: “Terrorism is 10 percent bang and 90 percent an echo effect composed of media hysteria, political overkill and knee-jerk executive action, usually retribution against some wider group treated as collectively responsible.”

Of course, the US isn’t the only superpower on the block, and the recent saber rattling between the US and Iran doesn’t sit well in Moscow or Beijing, which have cut oil deals with the theocratic regime, the one from Tehran, that is. Religious fanatics like Pat Robertson and neocon windbags like Newt Gingrich drool over a final confrontation between the forces of good and evil, and wonder aloud if World War III is on its way. Look busy; Jesus is coming.

And now, reading from exactly the same spurious script that led up

Consider the latest estimate from the BC auditor general of the “true cost” for the Vancouver/Whistler 2010 Olympics: a staggering \$2.5 billion, four times the initial bid, with the estimate expected to rise. The local media is mildly appalled on our behalf, but it’s not like we haven’t seen this movie before.

face and picks up a microphone. With smiling contempt for the event, the townspeople and even their groundhog, he narrates the tepid drama of the creature’s emergence from its burrow. When a storm moves in, Phil and his crew are forced to stay overnight in town. The next morning, he awakens to Sonny and Cher’s *I Got You Babe* on the radio, the first sign that something is wrong. To the weatherman’s horror, he discovers he is reliving Groundhog Day every day, over and over again.

Although *Groundhog Day* is billed as a romantic comedy, I think of it more as an existential farce – a genre unto itself. Its theme of maddening repetition perfectly sums up the human habit of doing the same dumb shit over and over again. All you have

estimate expected to rise. The local media is mildly appalled on our behalf, but it’s not like we haven’t seen this movie before: The Montreal Olympic stadium, intended for the 1976 Games, took a quarter-century to finally complete, at a price tag of \$1 billion. According to *Forbes* magazine, Montreal, Sydney, Barcelona and Athens are still paying off debt taken on to finance the games. There is a pattern emerging; every decade or less, taxpayers in a “world-class” city wake up from their two-week party with a persistent hangover – increased property taxes, diminished civic services and a pain in the backside.

Yet in terms of repetitive behaviour that beggars the many and profits the few, sports-related megaprojects are small potatoes. The greatest debt cre-

of MAD (mutually assured destruction) actually ensured our survival. With three superpowers and their proxies holding nuclear triggers to each other’s heads, it was a decades-long standoff. Then the Berlin Wall fell and the western world lived for nearly two decades in a geopolitical limbo, with global villains thin on the ground. The Ghaddafis and Ayatollahs were scary, but not in a theatrical, edge-of-your-seat sense. There were few genuine Darth Vaders who could conjure the proper heroic posturing from statesman and arms merchants. But with 9/11, the perfect figure appeared from central casting: the bearded, olive-skinned Osama bin Laden.

Intriguingly, the Bush administration soon dropped this perfectly

to the invasion of Iraq, pundits and policy makers are yammering about Iran's efforts to acquire nuclear weapons, and how an unhinged dictator is defying the UN and threatening the world.

Welcome to *Groundhog Day*, Washington-style. Global military spending is expected to hit \$1.06 trillion this year, topping the record set during the Cold War era, according to a September Oxfam report. In the words of Canadian military writer Gwynn Dyer, "All the major states are still organized for war, and all that is needed for the world to slide back into a nuclear confrontation is a twist of the kaleidoscope that shifts international relations into a new pattern of rival alliances."

With the coalition's dustup in civilization's crib, Canada has its own *deja vu* duties to perform. Afghanistan has been the tomb for imperial ambitions, from British to Russian; no one has ever been able to wrest this patch of dusty earth from the local warlords for long, and it's not likely we will either. It's hard to make campaigns in the Khaiber appetizing, but the cocksure leaders of the Anglo-American empire always try their best. As always, they're prepared with a rhetorical menu, heavy on God, democracy, freedom and evil. It's an age-old recipe for foreign campaigns, and every generation or two, young recruits and their beaming parents

politely eat it.

One specific example of war's *Groundhog Day*-like irrationality is the practice of aerial bombardment of civilian populations. Air wars result in the deaths of greater numbers of innocents and usually intensify opposition from those liberated from their homes or family members. But we've long known that, at least since World War II. The German bombing of England did immense damage to the

ture in Lebanon, has discovered that bombarding civilians rarely works out as planned. So with all this historical background, coalition commanders somehow figure that an air campaign will work against the Taliban. (The respected European think-tank, Senlis Council, which focuses on Afghanistan, just reported the Taliban movement is "... taking back Afghanistan" and now controls that nation's southern half.)

Welcome to *Groundhog Day*, Washington-style. Global military spending is expected to hit \$1.06 trillion this year, topping the record set during the Cold War era, according to a September Oxfam report.

infrastructure, but it also sent tens of thousands down into the tube stations, where they lifted their spirits by joining in song.

In the early seventies, the US bombing campaign in Southeast Asia picked up as the land war was grinding to a halt. The Nixon White House faced an unwinnable war against the Vietcong, and not just because a guerilla insurgency couldn't be erased from the air. American troops were refusing to report for duty – nearly half a million worldwide, according to one estimate – and the home audience was tiring of the carnage. Even Israel, with its most recent misadven-

If the powers that be weren't so insulated from bad advice, maybe they would recognize a recurring historical pattern. Perhaps a group screening of Bill Murray's best film would help. In the film, Murray's character suffers through the same excruciating pleasantries and civic bumpf day after day in Punxsutawney. With nothing to lose, Phil tells his attractive new producer, played by Andie MacDowell, that he's reliving *Groundhog Day* over and over. She thinks he's nuts, but he proves it by telling her what will happen next in the coffee shop.

Stuck in a *Mobius strip* of strip-malls and souvenir shops, Phil dis-

covers a purpose: the conquest of his producer. Yet because it's the same day repeating, she can't recall what he told her 24 hours earlier. This means he has to compress all his efforts at revelation and romance – and getting laid – into one day. With plenty of time on his hands, Phil tries every imaginable ruse. Yet at the end of every *Groundhog Day*, she refuses to stay overnight, usually because his efforts seem too manipulative and rehearsed. Feeling suicidal, he kidnaps the town's groundhog and drives off a cliff. The next morning, the bullet-proof weatherman wakes up again to *I Got You Babe* on the radio.

Knowing that the suicide option is out, Phil gives up and tries something new. Each relived day becomes an opportunity for him to spend his free time in any way he likes. With eternity on his hands, Phil starts to fart around the town and learns to live for the moment. He starts to find something worthwhile in average people and his personality changes for the better.

I won't give away the ending, in case you are among the few who haven't seen this terrific film. Suffice to say that Phil's liberation comes as he finally learns to stop trying to control his love interest and the world at large. It's quite a karmic message from a Hollywood production. Although there is no explicit mention of East-

continued on p.42

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Enron executive stands in front of head office office

BY JOSEPH ROBERTS

It is a strange phenomenon when you work in the media you think you know a lot. But it wasn't until I watched the film *Enron, the Smartest Guys in the Room* that I had any idea of the scope and size of the business scandal. Vast numbers of people, governments, bankers, lawyers, accountants, employees and shareholders conspired, or ignored

their responsibility, causing such worldwide deception. Knowing this particular bit of recent corporate history, puts what is at stake here in BC and Canada in perspective. I watched the movie again last week using the DVD's bonus feature with the director's explaining why he chose specific shots, music and other aspects that make the film work well. When he was

first approached to direct the project he was not at all interested in making a movie about accounting. But after reading the book, he got engrossed by how human nature played itself out. He realized that it was a story about people with different ethics and desires whose roles in this high takes drama, brought some ultimately to their death, while thousand of others were financially ruined.

So what does Enron have to do with our Canadian lives? Plenty. BC is part of the continental energy grid. We are unwittingly in their game. To understand this you really do need to see the DVD or read the book *Enron, the Smartest Guys in the Room*. Much of the energy and utilities deregulation, and accompanying graft of public funds continues. Some of the Enron executives or consultants who bailed out before the Enron crash are alive and well, they just changed horses in midstream.

Certain Enron executives, companies and accountants convicted of crimes contributing towards the biggest bankruptcy scandal in America, are by law not allowed to practise in California. Some of these people or their associates are influencing deal makers in BC to dismantle our finest vertically integrated public corporation, BC Hydro, and leave it vulnerable to NAFTA challenges.

We have been told for the last three decades that less government is better and no government is best. But what is more accurate is that we need less corrupt government, and more good honest open government that looks after the interests of our communities and the public resources we all own. Anything less than that is unacceptable.

Borrow the Enron DVD from your library, or buy or rent the movie. Then tell your friends to watch it.



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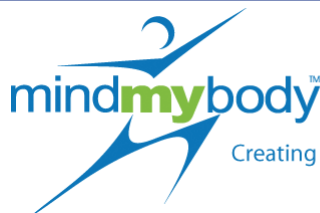
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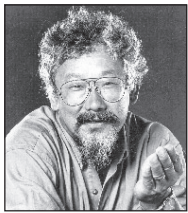


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Crocodile Hunter much more than a showman

SCIENCE MATTERS • DAVID SUZUKI

Scientists sometimes call them “charismatic megafauna,” but most people would just say they’re cute and fuzzy. Certain animals, such as bears, tigers and the great apes, have become poster children for the environment because, for many people, they symbolize the beauty and majesty of all of nature.

Steve Irwin was not one of those people. Irwin, the famous Crocodile Hunter, was killed by a stingray in early September while scuba diving off the coast of Australia. He became famous, not for showing the world the cutest and cuddliest of creatures, but for highlighting those that terrify us the most – crocodiles, snakes, spiders and other creepy-crawlies.

I was on a book tour in Australia in September and was scheduled to meet up with Steve Irwin. Sadly, that meeting will never take place and I will miss out on spending time with someone for whom I feel a great deal of kinship and respect.

Growing up in Canada, my passion and my playground was a swamp near my home. There, I waded through cattails to catch frogs, fish,

spiders, snakes and anything else I could get my hands on. I was utterly fascinated by these creatures and had a burning curiosity to find out what they did, how they lived, what they ate and what ate them.

I would not be surprised if Irwin

Vulture.

But that’s precisely what made Steve Irwin’s role so important. True, he often went after the spectacular creatures himself – just not the pretty ones. At least, not pretty to most people. He went after the ones

Steve Irwin helped us understand those things that many people thought were at best a nuisance, and at worst a horror. That made him a great educator and conservationist.

had similar experiences as a child. Both of us seem to like things that others might call ugly or dirty. To us, they are all beautiful.

Certainly, I understand why people gravitate towards the most charismatic, loveable creatures. It can even be beneficial and educational. Piquing people’s interest in the environment with the world’s most charismatic creatures may start them on the road to an understanding and a respect for all of nature. After all, *March of the Penguins* would never have become the international sensation that it did had it been called *Flight of the Turkey*

that were either unknown or vilified, the ones that were hunted down and despised by most of humanity. He’s been criticized for doing this simply for the rush or to feed his ego, but in so doing he put the spotlight on creatures that would have otherwise only been seen by the general populace in their nightmares.

Every creature has a role to play in an ecosystem. Ugly, “dirty” or microscopic ones are often the most important. It has been said that humans could disappear off the planet and the rest of nature would flourish and thrive, but if ants disappeared, the

natural world would be thrown into chaos.

Humanity will not protect that which it fears or does not understand. Steve Irwin helped us understand those things that many people thought were at best a nuisance, and at worst a horror. That made him a great educator and conservationist. At a time when interest in the basics of science, like taxonomy – the discovery and classification of living things – is waning in favour of high-tech fields, it’s a role that will be sorely missed.

Famed Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson coined the term “biophilia,” meaning an innate love and kinship for other biological creatures. Steve Irwin had it in spades and he wanted to share it with the world. It was his enthusiasm for life on this planet – any life – that made him so remarkable.

Steve Irwin may not have focused on the charismatic megafauna of the world, but the world clearly saw many of those same characteristics in him.

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Thoughts for a starry night

EARTHFUTURE • GUY DAUNCEY

One of the glorious things about being away from the city is the chance to gaze at the stars, and wonder. The universe is large, but *how* large? If Earth were the size of a pea, Sirius, the closest major star, would be 21,000 miles away. That's an awful lot of space.

Since the distances are so vast, we measure them in light years, the distance light travels in a year. That's nine trillion kilometres, or 343 billion marathons, if you were thinking of running it.

Sirius is 2,950 billion marathons away. If the running gets tiring, you might want to hide inside a flashlight and travel with the beam as it rushes through space. It would take you 8.6 years to get there, travelling at just over a billion kilometres an hour, 16,000 times faster than *Voyager*, Earth's fastest spaceship.

Travelling at the speed of light, you'd be subject to "time dilation," whereby time slows down as you speed up, so a five-hour trip would take just two minutes in personal time. You could travel to Sirius

in 20 days, spend a week there, and return in 20 days. Back on Earth, life would have advanced by 17 years, so it might be a good way to pass a long jail sentence.

That's just one star. What about the rest of the Milky Way galaxy? Astronomers reckon it contains between 100 billion and 400 billion stars.

Now for the big question. Is there anyone out there? After making allowance for all factors, astronomers reckon that the conditions for civilizations to exist in our galaxy are present on millions of planets.

And that's just our galaxy. The staff at the Hubble space telescope reckons there are some 125 billion galaxies in the universe. In each galaxy, there could be millions of civilizations.

So even if you found a way to zip around using wormholes, as Jodie Foster did in Carl Sagan's movie *Contact*, you might find yourself thinking, "So many planets, so little time!" That there are so many galaxies with the potential for so many civilizations in so much space is mind-boggling.

But now think back to a dark and starry night 10 million years ago when our ancestors were primates in the forests of Africa gazing at the moon. For them to imagine that their

offspring would one day travel to the moon would also have been mind-boggling.

Earth will still exist 10 million years in the future. I'm willing to stick my neck out and say that humans will exist too, if we can get through this rather tricky phase of our cultural evolution.

Our bodies will be just as they are today, since we are no longer dying off before we breed in large enough numbers, on a persistent enough basis, for evolution to occur. But our consciousness, our science and our spiritual awareness will be so far advanced that we can't begin to conceive what that future might offer, any more than a fifth century Celt in Ireland could have conceived of surfing the Internet.

But first we have to get through our present planetary crisis. It is only 40 years since we first saw our planet from space and felt our consciousness

shift to a global identity. We are the first generation in history that has started to think and act globally, rather than locally or nationally.

As soon as we work together as one planet, we will

be able to solve our various problems – global warming, dying oceans, forest destruction and warfare – and open the doors to the next stage of our evolution. Our generation's task is to solve these problems so that future generations will be able once more to dream of incredible things.

We really are at a huge civilizational crossroads. If we succeed, the future will be ours in which to dance. And how can we best solve our problems? By focusing our attention on the vision of success, not on the fear of failure. We need to know, deep down, that we can do this.

We've come a long way; there's no need to hesitate now.

Guy Dauncey is author of *Earthfuture: Stories From a Sustainable World* (New Society Publishers) and other titles. He lives in Victoria. (www.earthfuture.com)

Correction

We apologize for printing the incorrect version of Guy Dauncey's column Earthfuture in our September 2006 edition:

1) "The projects still have to go through the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency ..." Correction: "The projects still have to go through environmental assessment ..."

2) "... they'll be allowed to produce 92 more times pollution than the gas-fired Sumas 2 project ..." Correction: "... they will produce far, far more air pollution than the gas-fired Sumas 2 project ..."

The staff at the Hubble space telescope reckons there are some 125 billion galaxies in the universe. In each galaxy, there could be millions of civilizations.

How Often Do You Hear Yourself Saying "NO, I Haven't Done It Yet, I've Been Meaning To!"

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Their minds are a hodge-podge of half baked ideas and "I've been meaning toos". They think of a thousand "schemes" to make money quickly—but DO nothing about them. Thoughts flash in and out of their brain with the speed of lightning. New ideas rush in crowding out old ones before they have taken form, shape or completion.

They are SCATTER-BRAINED...

Their mind is like a powerful automobile running wild—destroying their hopes and dreams, their POSSIBILITIES! They wonder why they don't get ahead and never get anything done. They cannot understand why others, with less ability, pass them in the prosperity parade. They pity themselves, excuse themselves, and sympathize with themselves. The great tragedy is that they have every quality that leads to success—intelligence, originality, imagination, ambition and completion! Their trouble is that they don't know how to USE their brain properly.

Their mental make-up needs an OVERHAULING...

There are millions like them—failures, half successes—slaves to those with BALANCED, ORDERED MINDS. It is a known fact that most of us use only one-tenth of our brainpower. The other nine-tenths are dissipated into thousands of fragmentary thoughts, daydreaming, wishing. We are only paid for ONE-TENTH of what we possess because that is all we USE. We also accomplish things with the same ONE-TENTH.

We are hundred horse-power motors delivering only ONE-TENTH of the total horse power we possess!! The reason most people fall miserably below what they dream of attaining in life is that certain mental faculties in them BECOME ABSOLUTELY HALF-STARVED THROUGH DISUSE and "Non-Supporting Thoughts," just as a muscle often does. If, for instance, you lay for a year in bed, you would sink to the ground when you arose; your leg muscles, UNUSED FOR SO LONG, they could not support you.

You Possess Everything You Need In Your Mind!

It is no different with those rare mental faculties, which you envy others for possessing. You actually DO possess them, but they are ALMOST HALF-STARVED, like unused muscles, simply because they are faculties you seldom, if ever, USE. Be honest with yourself. You know in your heart that you can have more, be more, and attain more if you just begin to do the things you know you need to get down now!

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PharmaCare's drug addiction bankrupting public coffers

DRUG BUST • ALAN CASSELS

If you haven't yet seen the doomsday graph, you should take a look. It's a government projection of where BC will be spending its collective provincial wealth over the next 10 years. Currently, health eats up 41.5 percent, education 28.4 percent and "other" – things like social services, transportation and other stuff – takes up 27 percent. In 10 years, given a reasonable rate of growth based on past experience, healthcare will eat up 71.3 percent of the overall budget, education will consume 27 percent and "other" will get nothing.

In other words, healthcare, given reasonable projections, becomes ever more like Godzilla – big and ugly and eating everything in sight. Let's look at the facts:

1) BC's health budget now stands at nearly \$12 billion, having risen about 36 percent in the last five years.

2) Pharmaceuticals lead the growth in health spending. BC PharmaCare's budget is about \$1 billion per year and it grows every year by about another \$90 million, or roughly \$250,000 per day.

3) It is true that while some new drugs help keep people out of hospitals, very few are breakthroughs. According to Canada's research-based pharmaceutical companies, between 1983 and 2001, hospitalization rates decreased by 75 percent for ulcers, 71 percent for HIV/AIDS, 44 percent for diabetes and respiratory diseases, and 31 percent for chronic liver disease. Of the 296 new drugs arriving on the

Canadian market between 2000 and 2004, nine drugs (0.3 percent) were considered "breakthrough."

4) The average after-tax return rate of the 10 largest drug companies over the last 10 years was 29 percent, creating enormous pressure on the cost of healthcare, both public and private. On average, those companies spent 2.6 times more on marketing than they did on research and development.

Another fact that seems undeniable,

whichever end of the political spectrum you are on, is that healthcare is insatiable. With growth in spending skyrocketing past anything inflation can throw at us, politicians and industry leaders blame the "aging population." Assorted profit seekers and healthcare entrepreneurs are keen to exploit forthcoming opportunities. All this leads to one inevitable conclusion: open your pockets buddy; here comes private payment for healthcare. Goodbye Canada Health Act. It was nice knowing you.

The scenario of incredibly inflationary health spending, the doomsday graph I referred to, was used as a key backdrop to the *Conversation on*

Health just launched by the BC government. Recently, Finance Minister Carole Taylor noted in a *Globe and Mail* article how unseemly it was that only three months into the new fiscal year, BC's health authorities were coming cap-in-hand to the government saying they needed another \$1.1 billion. She'd paid them their allowance and they wanted more? Shocking, but true.

But what can we hope for from the *Conversation on Health*, announced

I believe it has to unroll in a way that generates, and even encourages, conflict, rather than consensus. In fact, if anything, involving the public and finding solutions through consensus will likely be the death knell of our publically-funded healthcare system. We need the sparks and fire that come from fierce debate, not polite toadying around the elephant in the room.

Some have said that the biggest cost driver is the drug budget. I am

Pharmaceuticals lead the growth in health spending. BC PharmaCare's budget is about \$1 billion per year and it grows every year by about another \$90 million, or roughly \$250,000 per day.

in last February's budget, as a way to involve the public in decisions about publically-funded healthcare? I'm sure that one of the main goals of this process will be to achieve some sense of public understanding of the cost growth crisis and to then apply creative solutions to solve that crisis.

At least, I hope that's the goal.

Who could be against that? It's about time people know what healthcare really costs to enable them to contribute their ideas on how we might collectively deal with those exploding costs. In order to get at the root of the problem, however, I believe BC's *Conversation on Health* could be damned from the beginning.

not sure if that's true, but what is true is that we spend twice as much on pharmaceuticals as we did five years ago. Can anyone tell me what we are getting for all that spending? Did we get any additional benefits? Avoided hospitalizations, probably, but what about additional harms?

No doubt some people were hospitalized or died because of excessive or inappropriate drug use. Ever heard of Vioxx? Some wastage? It's stunning that unused medication sitting in peoples' medicine cabinets adds up to millions of dollars worth of wastage. Will the *Conversation* be about the benefits, the harms and the incredible level of wastage our health

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system generates?

I hope so, but probably not.

The opening political volleys on the *Conversation* are about two-tier medicine: public-private payment for health. Asking only who should be paying for healthcare instead of what value we are getting from what we are spending seems fruitless. The more radical approach to dealing with the skyrocketing costs of medication, hospitals and doctors would be to take the current \$12 billion we BC taxpayers are contributing every year to healthcare and begin removing whatever is frivolous and wasteful.

I believe firmly in two-tier medicine. The tiers, however, are not between public and private, but between essential and frivolous healthcare. Basically, before you should ask who needs to pay for it, you need to know whether or not a health treatment, a drug or a procedure is worth doing.

Publically, we could easily pay for what is essential from well within the current budget. But how come words such as "essential," "frivolous" or "waste" never seem to be part of the discussion?

Let's be clear about one basic fact: those mounting dollars we are spending on healthcare derive from somebody's income – whether it is a drug company, a professional association or a health authority – and it goes against the laws of nature for people to voluntarily agree to have their income cut. That's why you need to ask tough decisions about what is essential and what is frivolous and then steer public money away from the frivolous.

A delay in finding solutions to the health cost crisis is good for the status quo. For example, when it comes to their products, the drug companies that abhor any conversation about cost-effectiveness love a delay. Delay is good. Another day passes in BC and we pay an additional \$250,000 of our tax money to the drug companies. We'll hand them another \$250,000 tomorrow. Today, tomorrow, the day after and forever.

Some of that money will be well spent. Some will be wasted. And some will be spent dangerously and likely lead to further disability.

This provincial *Conversation on Health* needs to get off on the right foot, by encouraging us to face the fact that not all health care dollars are well spent, an approach that is sure to generate conflict, not consensus. But that's a good thing.

According to John Stauber, author of *Toxic Sludge Is Good for You* and an expert on how public relations agencies have been able to bypass grassroots democracy, the term "consensus process" is a "brilliant misnomer." Stauber says that since consensus implies a democratic process and is aimed at agreement, it is an essen-

tial weapon in the arsenal of government and industry, both of which, to a greater or lesser degree, desire to be in control of any public debate.

He cites public relations experts who see consensus as a key "crisis management tool," which is used to divide the populous, set the agenda and essentially defeat those who would seriously challenge the status quo, such as those troublemakers who ask, "Why are we polluting our rivers? Do we really need to clearcut the forests? Is it necessary to build freeways through our neighbourhoods?" To which I'd add, "Why do we need to be spending money on health treatments that add no value to the quality or length of our lives?"

Serious social change is likely to challenge the predominance of the status quo; consensus processes are about preserving the status quo. Stauber draws a number of powerful examples of PR firms within the environmental movement that are intent on defeating the grassroots activists working to protect rivers from toxic waste or pristine forests from being cut. He outlines a taxonomy of activism, fitting everyone into one of three categories: radicals, idealists and realists. The corporate goal, he says, is "... to defeat the real social change activists, the so-called radicals, by co-opting the realists and idealists into partnerships and consensus processes, while marginalizing the radicals."

It's no stretch to see how the tactics of Big Chemical or Big Tobacco have been adopted by Big Health. You need look no further than those groups "partnered" with the moneyed powers – pharmaceutical companies, professional associations and so on – representing the "realists" willing to settle for a "win-win." They know on which side their bread is buttered and won't adopt positions that affect the industry's most fundamental goal: creating returns for shareholders via growing healthcare spending.

Meanwhile, there are the "idealists" – many disease-groups – which, in Stauber's words, can be "... counted on to sell out the concerns of the radicals." They work in the name of pragmatism and become convinced to work with the realists towards "win-win" solutions. Any agency that profits from the continued increases in healthcare wants consensus; it stops people from asking embarrassing questions, such as the ones I tend to pose to the pharmaceutical industry and its surrogates: "Tell us, what are we getting in return for the extra few billion we are spending every year on your products?"

My embarrassing questions finally got me into trouble. Just last month I was shut out of a talk at the Ministry of Health here in Victoria. On September 13, Sean Holman, creator of *Public Eye Online* (www.publiceyeonline.com) reported the following

under the headline Counterpunch:

"Yesterday, we reported University of Victoria researcher Alan Cassels would be speaking to provincial health bureaucrats about his new book *Selling Sickness: How the World's Biggest Pharmaceutical Companies Are Turning Us All Into Patients*.

"But, in an interview with *Public Eye*, the ministry's communications executive director Marisa Adair confirmed deputy minister Gordon Macatee has decided to postpone that speaking engagement.

"Explained Ms. Adair: 'Given Mr. Cassels' very specific viewpoint, the ministry would like to ensure someone representing the other viewpoint is booked (to speak)...'"

The main problem comes down to the rather "radical" notion I illustrated in my book: that we, as a society, are foolishly allowing the pharmaceutical industry and its "partners" free rein in defining diseases, and that those definitions are driving the astronomical growth in pharmaceutical spending.

Does my voice seem radical because the realists and the idealists have largely given up on radical solutions? I don't know. But I do know that we are starting to have a *Conversation on Health* in this province and people should endeavour to get their voices heard. The more radical the better, I'd say.

But let me leave you with one bit of advice. Before you ask the government to pay for more healthcare, pause for a moment and first suggest what it should stop paying for. Suggest where it might make some savings.

We have a vitally important opportunity to get some public input on how to control the skyrocketing cost of health. Let's not squander it. Personally, I'm hoping for some fireworks.

Alan Cassels is co-author of *Selling Sickness* and a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria. He is also the founder of *Media Doctor Canada* (www.mediadoctor.ca), which evaluates reporting of medical treatments in Canada's media.

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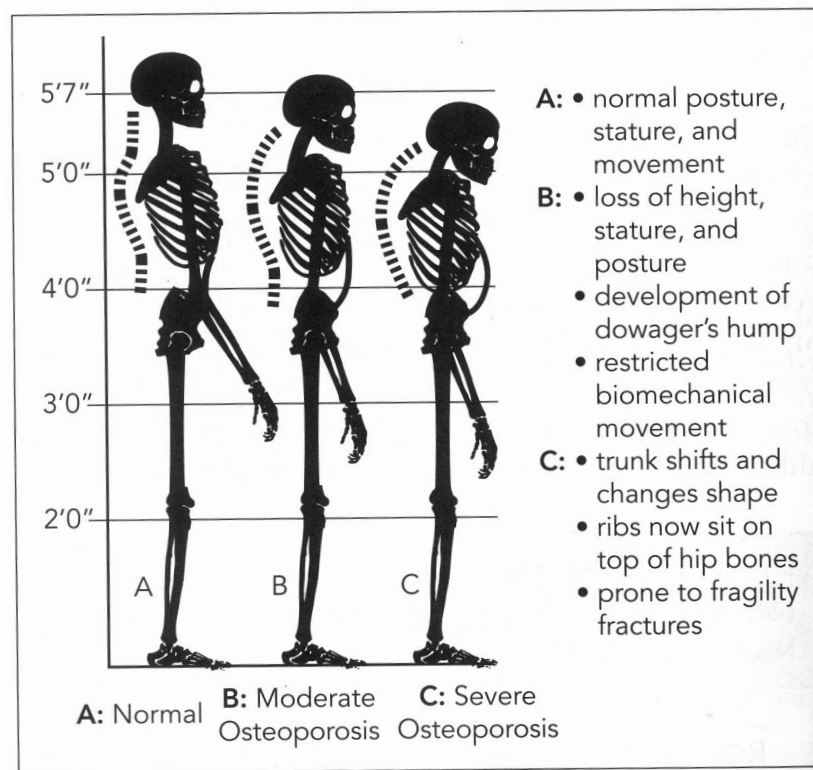


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Building better bones

BY SAM GRACI, CAROLYN DEMARCO AND LETICIA RAO



Consequences of osteoporosis

Are you improving your bone-building functions every day? One dogma about bone health has remained sacred until recently. The belief was that an osteoporotic bone cell once lost was gone forever. Thus older bones could not regenerate themselves. Experts believed any bone-density weakness was irreparable. Now, thanks to a group of visionary medical researchers, that idea has bit the dust, leading to thrilling new prospects of bone regrowth, recovery and rejuvenation.

You renew almost 1.75 million bone cells a second, 100 million cells a minute and 150 billion bone-building cells a day, all of which dictate your bone mineral density (BMD). A study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* was the first to prove that acute stress, as well as past or current depression, lowers BMD by six percent at the spine and up to 14 percent at the hip. A Mayo Clinic study found a significant positive correlation between BMD and muscle strength in those individuals who do weight-resistance and core muscle exercises.

Early prevention or inhibition of age-related bone loss in men and women has never been easier. Nutritional interventions and exercise are non-toxic and far less expensive than any other treatment option. And they work. For example, in a study of 72 osteoporotic people comparing the use of vitamin K2 to a first-generation bisphosphonate drug, no difference was found in the bone fracture

rate after 24 months.

Get a head start on improving your bone health

Unquestionably, scientists find a startling difference in bone cells of animals and people who are fed calcium-rich diets, vitamin D3, vitamin K1, magnesium, boron, silicon, isoflavones, the micronutrient trace minerals copper, zinc and manganese, and who also exercise regularly. They have healthy bones that are 40 to 60 percent stronger, denser and more flexible than improperly nourished bones, which are all too often simply taken for granted. Truly, we have entered a new miracle age with our bones, teeth and nails, bursting with the promise of unprecedented strength and life-long health. All of us alive today can become the beneficiaries of this new knowledge.

Intriguingly, researchers have found that supplementation with the hormones DHEA and melatonin appear to enhance new bone formation as well as inhibit bone breakdown.

Dehydropiandrosterone (DHEA)

DHEA is produced in the adrenal cortex. It is then rapidly converted into its sulfated form, DHEA-S, which is the primary form circulating in the bloodstream. Peak levels occur during the mid-twenties; after that, levels decrease rapidly and yearly until they are almost nonexistent by the time men and women reach their mid-eighties. DHEA begins to decline more quickly after age 34.

The lack of DHEA-S has been

closely associated with weak bones, osteoporosis, loss of libido and aging. A growing body of scientific research suggests that another important function of DHEA is to reduce and balance elevated levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Lowering cortisol levels gives a big boost to bone repair and bone-building systems. Elevated cortisol turns "on" the fight-or-flight response and genetically reroutes both energy and micronutrients from bone-building to the muscles.

DHEA is slightly controversial because it has been misused to solely enhance athletic performance, prompting the International Olympic Committee to ban it. Yet DHEA has a number of effects that are critical in a comprehensive bone-building plan. Low DHEA-S levels indicate a faltering adaptation response to stress and increased susceptibility to osteoporosis, loose teeth, reduced energy, electrolyte imbalances, high blood pressure, depression, cognitive dysfunction, diabetes and accelerated aging. Consequently, low bloodstream levels of DHEA-S impact the most basic cellular functions, including irregularities in daily bone-repair functions.

Melatonin: our biological clock

Numerous studies indicate that the hormone melatonin is critical for bone-building, delays aging, puts us into a deep regenerative sleep and is a powerful antioxidant in the human



Carolyn DeMarco MD, Sam Graci and Leticia Rao PhD

brain, neutralizing, among other things, the effects of cell phone use. Melatonin is a powerful scavenger of free radicals (renegade and destructive cells that break down and destroy healthy cells throughout the body, including those in the bone) and prevents the activation of pro-inflammatory chemicals, which can lead to

we have depended on variations in light intensity to synchronize our biological clock. Darkness, through a positive feedback loop, turns melatonin production "on," and light, through a negative feedback loop, turns production "off." This ancient bidirectional system was understood by our wise grandparents: "Early to bed, early to rise makes a person healthy, wealthy and wise."

Since 1945, the introduction of artificial light into every home threatened the proper sequencing of the pineal gland. Today, late-night television, videos, DVD movies, computers, computer games, chat lines, iPods, iHome, e-mail, the BlackBerry,

phones, just like second-hand or passive smoke, cannot avoid microwave radiation in crowded public places like sports arenas, meetings, offices, restaurants, buses or commuter trains. Recently, the *Archives of Medical Research* and *Molecular and Cellular Biochemistry* both proved that taking melatonin and other antioxidants can prevent the oxidative stress and free radical brain destruction caused by cell phones.

Only recently, researchers have found receptor sites for both melatonin and DHEA throughout bone-forming osteoblast cells. Both melatonin and calcitonin, a protein molecule that guides or chaperones calcium into bone structure, are elevated at night, following daytime bright light exposure. This suggests that night time is critically important to both bone repair and bone-building.

Andropause in men, and menopause in women, are associated with lowered secretions of DHEA-S and melatonin with a consequential acceleration of bone loss. There is considerable groundbreaking evidence that both adrenal and pineal gland functions are linked to osteoporosis in men and women.

Excerpted from The Bone-Building Solution by Carolyn DeMarco MD, Sam Graci, and Leticia Rao PhD. (John Wiley & Sons Canada, Ltd.)

You renew almost 1.75 million bone cells a second, 100 million cells a minute and 150 billion bone-building cells a day

widespread systemic inflammation. Furthermore, melatonin protects mitochondria – little energy-producing factories – in bone cells and the brain from oxidative damage (when cells "rust" and wear out).

The pineal gland, a small endocrine gland located near the middle of the brain, is a biological clock that secretes melatonin in a circadian rhythm. Melatonin levels rise after sunset and blood levels peak between 1am and 4am. For thousands of years,

video cell phones, e-Bay, downloading music and shopping online have significantly altered our deep-sleep patterns and reduced our melatonin levels.

Dr. Leif Salford of the University of Lund in Sweden stated in the 2003 edition of *Environment Health Perspectives* that all cell phone exposure is capable of causing nerve cell damage in the human brain. Dr. Tsuyoshi Hondou of Tohoku University in Japan showed that non-users of cell

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The bottom line on ecoforestry

Cortes Island residents get naked for nature

BY NOBA ANDERSON



Photo by: Chako

Cortes is my home, both in people and place. From the specific scent that pervades my awareness in late August of green arbutus skin, dry moss and sea salt, all sun-baked together with a hint of cricket song, the people and this place go back to the very beginning of my memory. My awareness began here. Cortes is home. For me, this is the heart of community forestry, of people in place.

Community forestry is about land rights. It seems that public awareness is being informed by the undistinguished land rights and treaty claims processes of the First Nations. All people, regardless of colour or history, want a sense of responsibility, permanence and purpose relating to land. Community forestry is about logging. Yes, it is about cutting down trees, creating forest industry jobs and building things with wood. It is also about other community values, such as walking trails, tourism, berry and mushroom collecting, sacred spaces and forest health. It is about community engagement, public process and working with your neighbour, however pleasant or tough. It's about standing up, being involved and taking responsibility.

BC context

Community forestry is a way of engaging with the wild spaces within which we live. It is simply local people making local decisions about their wild places. The vast majority of public forest lands in BC are allocated to large, international, industrial forest companies. More and more, rural BC is demanding increased community engagement and benefit. Five years

ago, our provincial government took back a significant amount of cutting rights from major forest operators and have been redistributing them to communities in various ways, including the expansion of the Community Forest program. Community Forest Agreements give communities management rights over nearby public lands. Although this is a breakthrough in the BC forest tenure system, there is reason for cynicism. Areas allocated to communities tend to be very socially contentious or heavily logged, situated in community watersheds, or accompanied by other operational and social difficulties.

Once communities begin the planning and cutting processes, we find ourselves working within a system designed for huge companies

ing holes in our provincial program, I find the whole movement very exciting.

Working with community forest initiatives in South America, South East Asia and around BC, I am struck by the universality of our desire for community forests. This vision resonates everywhere, both with left-leaning eco-folk and people from right-leaning industry towns. Cortes is not alone in wanting the decision-making process about its public forests to be returned to its community.

Cortes

Through my travels, I learned about peoples' struggles and successes and came to believe that Cortes Island had the necessary pieces to allow it to become a community forest success story. As an island, we are a defined

have had and especially now continue to have strong political support, and above all, we have a real love of place. We are not going away and neither is our vision of a community forest.

In the '90s, the Klahoose First Nation, within whose traditional territory we reside, led the way in pursuing ecosystem-based forest management both on Cortes and in its broader territory. Cortes residents, led by the Cortes Island Forest Committee (CIFC), shared with Klahoose many common interests and concerns regarding local forest management issues. As a whole, the Cortes community was not opposed to logging. However, like people everywhere, we did want the resources – plants, animals and water – of our forests maintained, as well as access to the economic opportunities from timber cut in our neighbourhood.

We realized that, in order to make this happen, we needed tenure over the public forestlands. So the CIFC, along with the Silva Forest Foundation and Klahoose, embarked on an extensive ecosystem-based analysis and mapping project of the island. The intention was to encourage both industry and government ministries to look beyond the boundaries of their respective jurisdictions by creating a landscape level planning framework that viewed the island as a whole, interconnected living system. This work was well under way by the time the provincial government created the formal Community Forest program in the late '90s.

In early 1999, the CIFC formally incorporated and became the

The vast majority of public forest lands in BC are allocated to large, international, industrial forest companies. More and more, rural BC is demanding increased community engagement and benefit.

that does not suit our specific needs. Economically, it can be very hard to survive in the world of big business, but for many, there is simply no other acceptable alternative to local control. It seems that our provincial government is a bit overwhelmed, if not perplexed, by the outpouring of communities that want community forests. It is truly a global movement that has seemingly caught on overnight in BC. Although there are pitfalls and gap-

area and people, giving us a clear land base and associated community. We have well educated, passionate and extraordinarily engaged community members. There is broad-based local support for the community forest vision and a model of native/non-native partnership. We have an extensive ecosystem-based plan for the island that, when implemented, will leave a fully functioning forest over time and throughout space. We

Cortes Ecoforestry Society (CES). A few months later, we signed a model memorandum of understanding with the Klahoose to work collaboratively under ecosystem-based principles on the forests of Cortes. The two communities celebrated this model community partnership with a signing ceremony and feast at the Klahoose village. Both parties agreed to work together to protect common interest in healthy island ecosystems through ecosystem-based forestry, and CES stated its support for a fair treaty settlement for Klahoose.

There has been extensive planning and preparation for the Cortes community forest for 15 years now. A draft management plan, business plan and Community Forest proposal have been prepared for the approximate 5,000 hectares of Cortes public forest land. Industrial private forest lands owned by Island Timberlands – previously Weyerhaeuser, and before it, MacMillan Bloedel – also comprise a component to the envisioned community forest, but that is truly another story. As for the public lands, our Cortes Community Forest proposal will be fine tuned in accordance with the provincial government's evolving policy at the time of submission.

Cortes is home and I want to love this island when I die here. My community forest work is far deeper than a job. It is a lifestyle. That is what keeps us all going, year after year. There is simply no other acceptable alternative. We all have community forests. We just need to start taking responsibility for them.

Noba Anderson is executive director of the Cortes Ecoforestry Society 250-935-6885 (noba@cortesecoforestry.org) (www.cortesecoforestry.org).

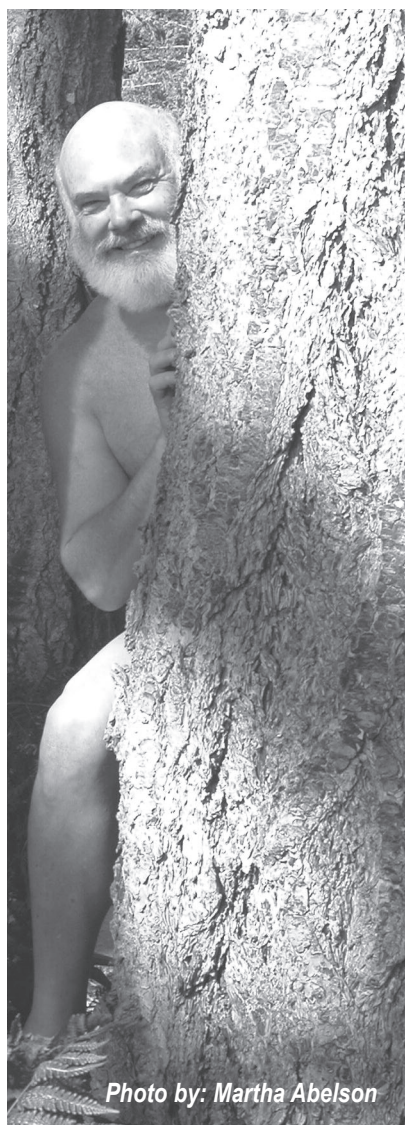


Photo by: Martha Abelson

Our personal health is directly linked to the health of our communities and our forests. Cortes is working toward just that in its community ecoforestry work. Healthy people, making local decisions resulting in healthy forests.

– Dr. Andrew Weil

Grit & Grace – People in Place

The CES 2007 nude calendar

The Cortes Ecoforestry Society is working toward creating a community forest on Cortes Island. Community forestry simply means local people making local decisions about the wild areas beyond their doorsteps. We on Cortes want the decision making about our forest lands, both public and private, to come home. The Community Forest movement is growing across BC and Cortes is poised to be a part of it.

CES put out a call for photo submissions on the theme of home and received a diversity of entries. The result is *Grit & Grace*, an evocative commentary on Cortes' social diversity, which plays a huge role in our community's health. Photos range from shots of the well-heeled to a guy living in his van, to picturesque sunsets, to the white trailer trash tattoo king, to an old man with strategically placed chickens, to the music beneath the cedars.

We received so many compelling photos that we produced a double calendar, featuring 12 months of grace and 12 months of grit. The title *Grit & Grace*, and indeed the photos themselves, underline the social tension found in communities everywhere. Each photo is accompanied by an equally compelling quotation. This calendar speaks directly to the meaning of the word community, revealing the many facets of Cortes and the diversity required for a healthy, rural community. The secondary title *People in Place* speaks to the essence of community forestry, the connection between community and land. Funds raised through the sale of this calendar will support the Cortes Community Forest vision.

Purchase calendars online at (www.cortesecoforestry.org) or call CES at 250-935-6888. Email (info@cortesecoforestry.org).

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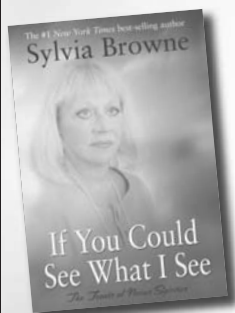
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Drop your negativity

THE POWER OF NOW • ECKHART TOLLE

How can we drop negativity? By dropping it. How do you drop a piece of hot coal that you are holding in your hand? How do you drop some heavy and useless baggage that you are carrying? By recognizing that you don't want to suffer the pain or carry the burden anymore and letting go of it.

Deep unconsciousness, such as the pain-body, or other deep pain, such as the loss of a loved one, usually needs to be transmuted through acceptance combined with the light of your presence – your sustained attention. Many patterns in ordinary unconsciousness, on the other hand, can simply be dropped once you know that you don't want or need them anymore, and once you realize that you have a choice, that you are not just a bundle of conditioned reflexes. All this implies that you are able to access the power of Now. Without it, you have no choice.

"If you call some emotions negative, aren't you creating a mental polarity of good and bad?"

No. The polarity was created at an earlier stage when your mind judged the present moment as bad; this judgment then created the negative emotion.

"But if you call some emotions negative, aren't you really saying that they shouldn't be there, that it's not okay to have those emotions? My understanding is that we should give ourselves permission to have whatever feelings come up, rather than judge them as bad or say that we shouldn't have them.

Of course. Once a mind pattern, an emotion or a reaction, is there, accept it. You were not conscious enough to have a choice in the matter. That's not a judgment, just a fact. If you had a choice, or realized you have a choice, would you choose suffering or joy, ease or unease, peace or conflict? Would you choose a thought or feeling that cuts you off from your natural state of well-being, the joy of life within?

How is it possible that humans killed in excess of 100 million fellow humans in the twentieth century alone? Humans inflicting pain of such magnitude on one another is beyond

anything you can imagine. And that's not taking into account the mental, emotional and physical violence, the torture, pain and cruelty they continue to inflict on each other as well as on other sentient beings on a daily basis.

Do they act this way because they are in touch with their natural state, the joy of life within? Of course not. Only people who are in a deeply negative state, who feel very bad indeed,

How is it possible that humans killed in excess of 100 million fellow humans in the twentieth century alone? Humans inflicting pain of such magnitude on one another is beyond anything you can imagine.

would create such a reality as a reflection of how they feel. Now, they are engaged in destroying nature and the planet that sustains them. Unbelievable but true.

It is certainly true that when you accept your resentment, moodiness, anger and so on, you are no longer forced

to act them out blindly, and you are less likely to project them onto others. But I wonder if you are not deceiving yourself. When you have been practising acceptance for a while, as you have, there comes a point when you need to go on to the next stage, where those negative emotions are not created anymore. If you don't, your "acceptance" just becomes a mental label that allows your ego to continue to indulge in unhappiness and so strengthen its sense of separation from other people, your surroundings, your here and now.

As you know, separation is the basis for the ego's sense of identity. True acceptance would transmute those feelings at once. You have an idea in your mind that everything is okay, but deep down you don't really believe it so the old mental-emotional patterns of resistance are still in place. That's what makes you feel bad. That's OK, too.

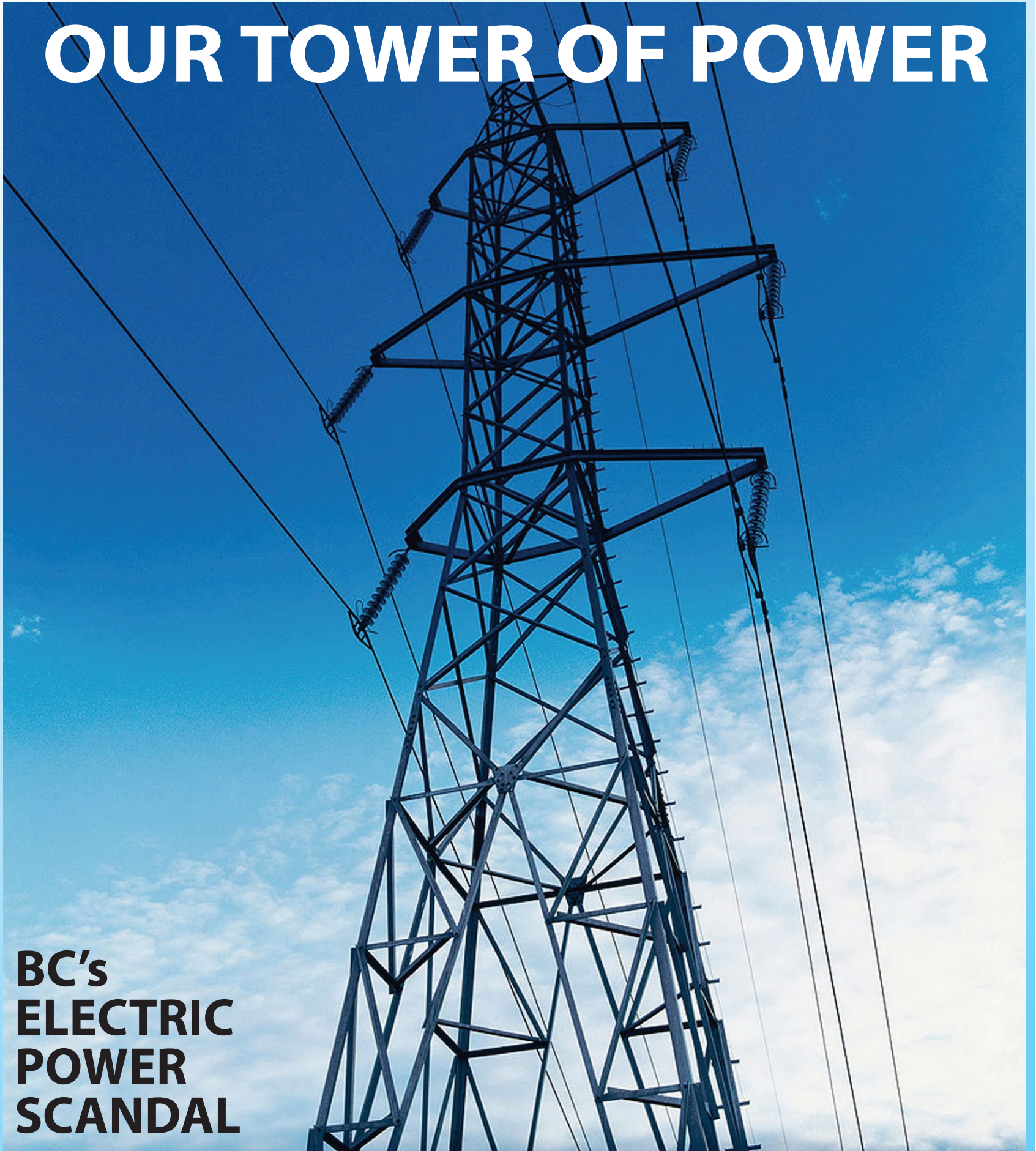
Are you defending your right to be unconscious, your right to suffer? Don't worry: Nobody is going to take that away from you. Once you realize that a certain kind of food makes you sick, would you carry on eating that food and keep asserting that it is OK to be sick?

Adapted from The Power of Now, copyright 1999 by Eckhart Tolle. Reprinted with permission of New World Library, Novato, CA, 800-972-6657 (ext. 52).

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Our rivers make power for us and bring us wealth. We have always imported energy because we can store it and re-sell it. We do not need private companies to make this power for us.

BC Hydro, a public utility, used to add \$700 million annually to the public purse while delivering some of the least expensive power in the world. In the future it could add billions as energy prices rise worldwide.

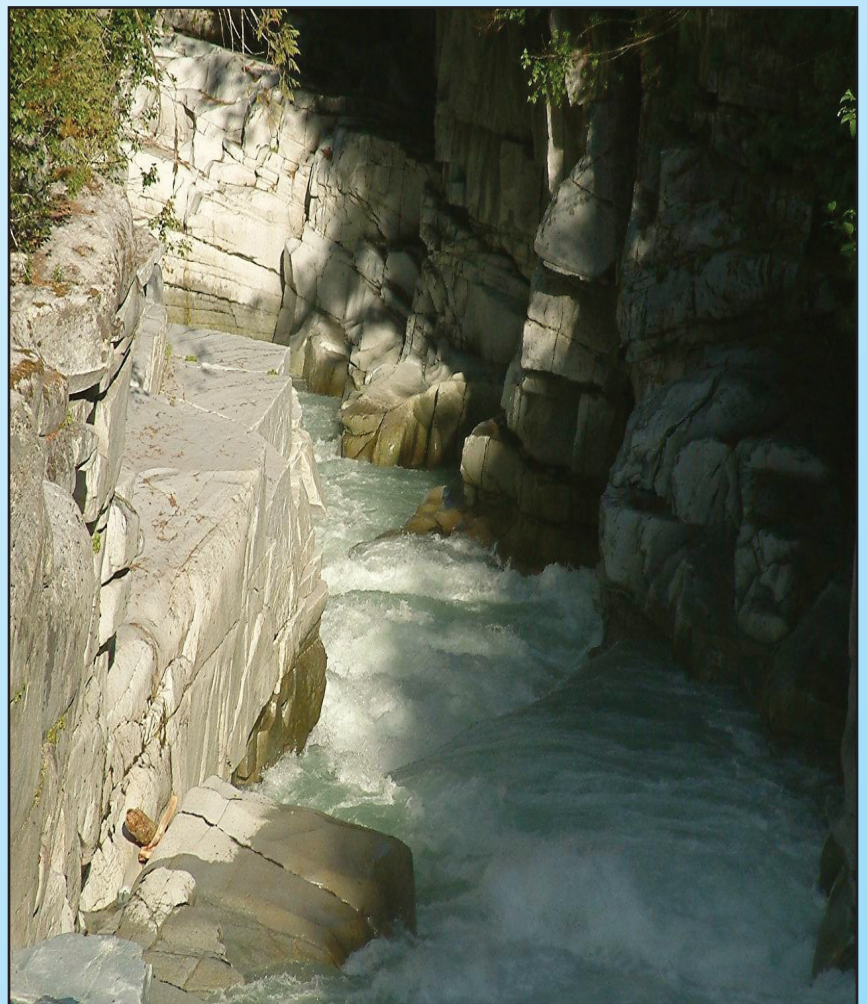
The BC government promised public involvement in energy decisions in 2001. It has not kept this promise.

Instead, acting against municipalities and the general public, it is giving away our public energy resources.

The end of publicly controlled electric power is fast approaching. The people of British Columbia will be stunned by dramatic price rises in the near future.

As **owners** of BC Hydro generation facilities, our **asset** used to add \$700 million to public coffers each year and **it costs us \$6 per megawatt hour** for the power produced by it, one of the lowest electric power rates in the world.

But, BC Hydro **will be charged** an average **\$100 per megawatt hour** for the power produced by private energy interests. All profits go to billionaires.



Ashlu Canyon is threatened unless the zoning denial is upheld

WE ARE BEING ENRONized

Private power, water licences and Bill 30

During the last few years the provincial government has gone to unusual lengths to keep energy information from the public. We said we wanted our electric power systems kept public. In 2001, the BC Energy plan was introduced prohibiting BC Hydro from developing any new energy sites. All future energy developments were to be private. The government then used laws against us to overrule us.

In 2003, the government put the financial services of BC Hydro into the hands of Accenture Consulting of Bermuda (previously the Enron accounting firm of Arthur Andersen) and then changed the Energy and Mines Act to avoid any scrutiny and make the deal secret. So began the dismantling of our power system, but it is reversible right now.

In May of 2006, the government enacted sweeping legislation, Bill 30, removing the public's right to vote on proposed private power installations in their own communities. The Bill removes municipal authority over zoning by turning over control of land use to private companies.

Bill 30 strips people of their most important means of defending local interests in resource allocation decisions. Local governments exist to build community in the fullest sense of the word. They exist to put into action the goals and visions of residents – to support businesses and industries that provide jobs, to support development of houses, parks, schools, water and sewer plants and all the services needed by a thriving community. On a daily basis city councils and regional districts are faced with difficult decisions over land use – how do you balance a project that entices the community with promises of jobs and tax revenue against the changes that project will bring or effects it will have on the community or its land and environment?



Water Licences

A water licence costs \$10,000 or less for a whole waterway. The net present value of a single private, run-of-river power project can approach \$1 billion. There are about 500 active applications. Most of them are in the Squamish Lillooet Regional District. Several licence holders are former BC Hydro executives. Power purchase agreements are issued at the current average rate of \$100 per MWh and the public receives a flat fee of \$1 per MWh. A capacity charge is also levied of a few percentage points. The private company owns the facility and has a perpetual water licence of incredible value. It receives all of the income above the cost, about a 97 percent gain. At the end of the contract period with BC Hydro it can sell to whoever it wants in North America for as much as it can get.

Bill 30 was the result of the Ashlu zoning denial

Nowhere was the challenge to local politicians and the public more evident than with Ledcor's private power proposal on the Ashlu River near Squamish. For more than three years, the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, together with local residents and river users from other parts of the province and the US, took part in many public meetings, open houses and public hearings.

Hundreds of speakers gave passionate accounts of the value the Ashlu River held for them as recreation users, as owners in the emerging recreation business sector in Squamish, and as ordinary residents who knew the jewel-like beauty of this river. At the same meetings, the regional district heard repeatedly from Ledcor as they offered financial incentives to the Squamish Nation which became partners in the project, and the local controversy deepened as aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities took sides. It created controversy and acrimony in a community that has long accepted many types of industrial development. In the end, the regional district did what local governments are meant to do; listened and turned down the Ashlu project rezoning. Twice.

The local government did so based on its Official Community Plan. Policies were adopted in response to the gold rush of small "green" hydro projects. The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District had more than 65 potential projects that had passed initial screening by the province. Policies were enacted based on two years of consultation with area residents, the new private power industry and other government agencies. Those policies clearly support "green energy" developments, where the project does not conflict with

other community values and goals. Policies that were based on experience with some of the first IPP developments (Mamquam province at one point). Policies were enacted based on two years of consultation on this issue with area residents, the new private power industry and other government agencies, facilitated by experts in the emerging small energy field. Those policies clearly support “green energy” developments, where the project does not conflict with other community values and goals. Policies that were based on experience with some of the first IPP developments (Mamquam River, Rutherford River and Miller Creek) in the region that resulted in a number of concerns that “green” does not necessarily mean “no impacts.” Policies spelled out the expectations of the local government. Policies, that the regional district spent thousands of hours of staff, public and elected official’s time and financial resources on. This is local government at its best, working within its policy framework.

As a result, the SLRD has been a major source of “green energy” projects in the province. According to a staff report, a total of seven IPP projects have now been constructed representing some 183 MW of small hydro. These projects are in addition to major hydro facilities which bring the regional energy production to some 400 MW. (January 19, 2006 report to the board).

But, the Ashlu IPP didn’t meet the policy. In the words of Whistler Mayor Ken Melamed, “Most of us believe in the value of green energy but not at the expense of some of our most precious places in the province. It is my intention to deny the project.” (*Whistler Question* 03/01/06). And not only did Whistler turn down the Ashlu project, the regional district urged the province to complete a long term plan for IPP development in its area. The district wanted this strategy to ensure that decisions on small “green” energy projects be made within a framework, so all the potential projects, their transmission lines and other impacts can be looked at comprehensively. In consultation with all the players – industry, provincial ministries, local government. This is what local governments do to avoid more controversy and anguish over individual projects and to avoid ad-hoc decisions.

But, the provincial government doesn’t agree. From its perspective, energy is now solely a provincial responsibility and any energy project is automatically considered to be a public benefit, not to be held up by bothersome local interests. And even within the provincial government, planning for energy projects is not tolerated. The provincial Sea-to-Sky LRMP (land and resource use management plan) was underway during the controversy over the Ashlu project, its goal to resolve and allocate resource use between the multiple interests (industry, recreation, energy etc.). But the recommendations of the LRMP planning forum to set aside 11 streams, including the Ashlu, that had very high value for recreation or other uses was rejected by George Abbott, then minister of Sustainable Resource Management and by Dick Neufeld, then and now minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources. They wanted a free hand to develop. Particularly the Ashlu.

Bill 30

SECTION 56: (Utilities Commission Act, Section 121) provides that an authorization under the Act, including a certificate of public convenience and necessity and an exemption from the requirement to obtain that certificate, is not to be superseded or impaired by anything in or done under the Community Charter or the Local Government Act.

Bill 30 effectively exempts electricity generation projects from public reviews by local governments.

Prior to Bill 30, local governments would conduct public reviews to ensure such projects would not compromise local public values.

How Bill 30 applied to the Ashlu River

After the regional district denied Ledcor the Ashlu IPP for the second time, the province enacted Bill 30 as the Legislative Assembly closed in early 2006, to take away the ability of local governments to turn down any IPP development. With the adoption of Bill 30, the impacts of “green” hydro development are left to individual agencies with mandates to protect fish, protect water flows, and to sell or lease Crown land to increase provincial coffers. These agencies have, at best, a token public consultation component. Ledcor, with Bill 30 in hand, started working in the Ashlu in August without permits. The region, clearly, does not want them there. The Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) the umbrella group for all local governments has taken a strong position against Bill 30.



Water licences give rivers away to private companies

Alcan

In 1950 the Nechako River was licensed to Alcan to make power for industrial development and smelting. Alcan, in 2001, wrote a submission to the BC Energy Task Force, which largely became the BC Energy Plan. It paved the way for Alcan and all of the newly created private power run-of-river companies to take public rivers and make them private through a process called water licences. The Alcan plan also called for a deregulated electricity market and the breaking up of BC Hydro as a public monopoly. More than 500 jobs have been lost and property values are down by 50 percent since 2001 as Alcan slowed production in the smelter. It has quietly sold more and more electricity and this year put \$140 million from hydroelectric sales in its pockets while paying only a tiny water rental fee to the public.

The District of Kitimat is fighting for us in the Supreme Court of BC doing what the province should have done all along which is to insist that Alcan abide by the 1950 agreement and make aluminum, not power. A few weeks ago the BC premier avoided the mayor and the Kitimat public by secretly meeting with Alcan and giving it a water licence so that Alcan could go forward to the BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) and entrench itself as an electricity seller. During the month of October, Alcan will be pursuing the power purchase agreement approvals through the BCUC. The district of Kitimat contributes up to 11 percent of the gross manufacturing product of the province. Power sales yield a 1,200 percent profit while aluminum produces a 30 percent profit. Such a change would devastate the already beleaguered population of Kitimat, as it would likely mean the end of Alcan's concern with smelting.

"It is time the people of British Columbia acted together in defence of water resources. The permanent transfer of public waterpower assets is imminent. If people knew the extent of lost value they would be outraged. The BC government is diverting huge current and future revenues from public resources into private pockets that could instead be funding our health care and education. Where is the accountability? The public needs to fight this giveaway of resources," says Mayor Richard Wozney of Kitimat.

Cascade Falls on the Kettle River at Christina Lake

Seabreeze Inc. a company with its name all over the changes in BC is a US transnational which has pursued the public of Christina Lake in the Kootenays relentlessly for 15 years. Cascade Falls is a beautiful local tourist asset. The public has worked tirelessly to bring forward and express their values and to save their highly valued tourist asset. The BC environment minister in September 2006 acted against the will of the people of Christina Lake and swept environmental concerns aside.

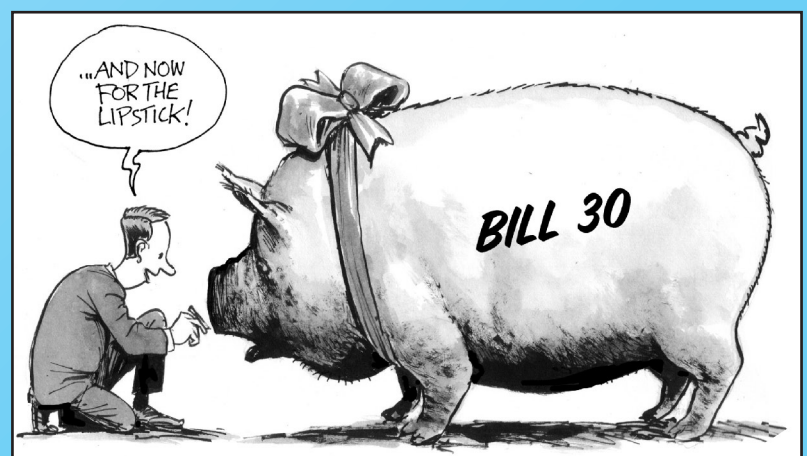
Payments by BC Hydro to Private Energy Developers F-2006 Call (2009-2051) and Current Unit Price

Fiscal Year	Payment (\$mm)	Energy (GW/yr)	Unit Price (\$MWh)
F2007	\$0	0	\$0.00
F2008	\$0	0	\$0.00
F2009	\$8	93	\$84.80
F2010	\$94	1,019	\$92.10
F2011	\$305	3,389	\$90.00
F2012	\$438	4,987	\$87.80
F2013	\$442	4,987	\$88.70
...
F2051	\$62	498	\$124.00
Total/ Average	\$15.6 billion	154,878	\$100.69

Our current cost is **\$6.00**
in our public system

Taken from *BC Hydro's Energy Purchases From Private Power Developers: Do We Want the \$15.6 Billion Price Tag?* by Prof. John Calvert at www.hydrofactsbc.ca

Although the provincial government has said it consulted with the citizens of Christina Lake in fact it only pushed its platform of mitigation. People do not want mitigation when they value an asset. It is the asset, alone which is valued. At the end of the day it approved a private project against the will of the people of Christina Lake" said Grace MacGregor, director for Area C, Christina Lake Regional District, Kootenay Boundary.



A LETTER FROM THE MAYOR OF VICTORIA OPPOSING BILL 30

THE CITY OF VICTORIA



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

May 11, 2006

Premier Gordon Campbell
Room 156, West Annex
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Premier:

At the May 11, 2006, Committee of the Whole meeting, City Council supports the following resolution and urges you to reconsider Bill 30:

WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia and the Union of BC Municipalities, by Memorandum of Understanding signed September 22, 2004 are committed to:

- Fostering cooperative inter-governmental relations,
- Recognizing the jurisdiction and accountability of both orders of government,
- Facilitating the responsible development of clean, renewable energy sources to meet the energy needs of British Columbians,
- Providing efficient and effective IPP review and approval processes for both orders of Government.

AND WHEREAS the amendment to the *Utilities Commission Act* proposed by Bill 30 will serve to:

- Eliminate local government involvement and engagement in IPP review and approval processes,
- Remove jurisdiction of local government over IPP's on Crown Land,
- Remove local government from the responsible development of clean, renewable energy sources,
- Impair cooperative inter-governmental relations, and

AND WHEREAS these amendments will have significant impacts for local governments throughout the province when the full scope and potential of IPP's are considered (e.g. wind, geo-thermal, coal bed methane and run of river projects);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Province of British Columbia be requested to immediately set Bill 30 aside and return to working with UBCM to complete the commitments of the MOU on Independent Power Projects as quickly as possible;

AND FURTHER THAT copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Premier, UBCM, MLA's and British Columbia local governments.

CARRIED

THE CORPORATE-POLITICAL SALES PITCH

This is a letter from a BC Liberal MLA, printed in the Squamish Chief Newspaper September 9, 2006, revealing the BC government is not being honest with its citizens. Comments by Marjorie Griffin Cohen, an economist and professor of political science and women's studies at Simon Fraser University, reveal this lack of honesty.

Dear Editor:

Contrary to Dr. Hamish Nichol's letter "Ledcor's insane profit a Liberal fallacy" in last weeks' Chief, the people of BC will be the main beneficiaries from all new power projects, located throughout the province.

First, I need to point out that it was the BC Liberal Government ensuring our governments heritage assets, including, including our water, dams and transmission lines will remain in the hands of the public forever.

British Columbians have 100% ownership of two crown corporations: one to generate electricity; the other for distribution. I believe most British Columbians support BC Hydro's goal or attaining energy self sufficiency, eliminating the need to import 12% of our power.

With our growing population, this cannot be achieved without creating new projects. With an eye on the prudent stewardship of our environment, BC Hydro awarded these 38 contracts to a variety of innovative ventures including three wind, two biomass, two waste heat and two coal/biomass along with 29 hydro enterprises. By investing into these ventures, the companies are simply assisting BC Hydro in meeting our current and future energy needs through the development of clean resources in BC. BC Hydro remains in the hands of the public and so does our water.

Those who are building and operating these projects must sell the electricity generated exclusively to the BC Hydro grid. Our water will be used to power our homes our businesses and our province.

JOAN MCINTYRE, MLA
WEST VANCOUVER GARIBALDI

A separate transmission company is the path Enron used in the US to make markets. Electricity will not be in the public sector. Each year a larger and larger proportion of our electricity is to go to private hands where they will sell power at new high prices to local consumers who will compete with US consumers, where today in New York and Los Angeles they pay 5-7 times our utility rates.

Coal is not a prudent or innovative environmental solution. This is extremely regressive. So too are the supposed "green energy" projects associated with the newly announced 29 hydro enterprises. Why is it that these projects are 'green' when undertaken by the private sector, but not when in the public sector? Many of the 29 projects divert huge amounts of water into tunnels - away from the river. A combination of these projects on any one river can have a devastating effect.

This is unusually deceitful. The provincial government has promised to keep BC Hydro public. Throughout this gutting of BC Hydro the government has assured the unknowing with this double entendre. If this gutting process continues then the public is left with a very small utility named BC Hydro with very large financial obligations. It will have to maintain the expensive local power lines. It will not have billing services and will lose control of all other aspects of the lucrative operation we in the public know and value as BC Hydro.

Companies are the main beneficiaries as they will sell power at very high prices while paying almost nothing for public resources.

This does not mean that power should be produced at any cost. 100 percent ownership of BC Hydro means little if all new electricity is in private hands. This means people in BC are paying much more for electricity than they would have if new facilities were built and owned, as they should be in my opinion, by BC Hydro, but also that the people of BC acquire no new assets - all of these installations will be wholly owned by private companies.

Investment this is not. We are giving very lucrative public purchase orders to companies that will build and own dams and generators. That process, money for nothing, is not an investment. The public does not think it is an investment. The government is assisting private companies to tens of billions of taxpayer dollars. The stupidity in this whole exercise is in not letting BC Hydro build for the future. The public will be subsidizing the private building of electricity generation without having any cost advantage at all. And, no new public assets will be created in the process.

This is completely untrue. Once electricity is in the BC Hydro /BC Transmission system electricity can be sold and distributed anywhere. When the public purchase agreements expire there is no commitment to continue to sell to Canadians. Forever is a very long time. BC Hydro has already guaranteed huge price premiums to the private companies.

THE SOLUTION IS IN YOUR HANDS

Save BC Hydro checklist

- ☐ Write, fax, and e-mail Premier Gordon Campbell.
- ☐ Share this information and meet with others and speak out.
- ☐ Get involved and help your fellow Canadians to protect rivers and the power grid.
- ☐ Contact people you know and ask them to make their voices heard today by creating a personal approach to demonstrate the value to you and your relatives, friends and fellow citizens of maintaining control of our rivers and our energy system.
- ☐ Write a letter to the editor of your local paper expressing your support for an immediate inquiry into these facts.
- ☐ Write to your MLA, go to their office and demand that they act to represent you by taking a stand and speaking for public energy.
- ☐ Call and write your federal MP and Prime Minister Stephen Harper and ask that they represent you by urging the BC government to immediately stop transferring the public energy wealth.

This crisis may seem huge and it may seem unstoppable. But it is not.

It is your money and your energy, which is being taken. Your neighbours need you to act. Together, we can save our energy system for generations to come. If you only have one fight in you, let it be now.

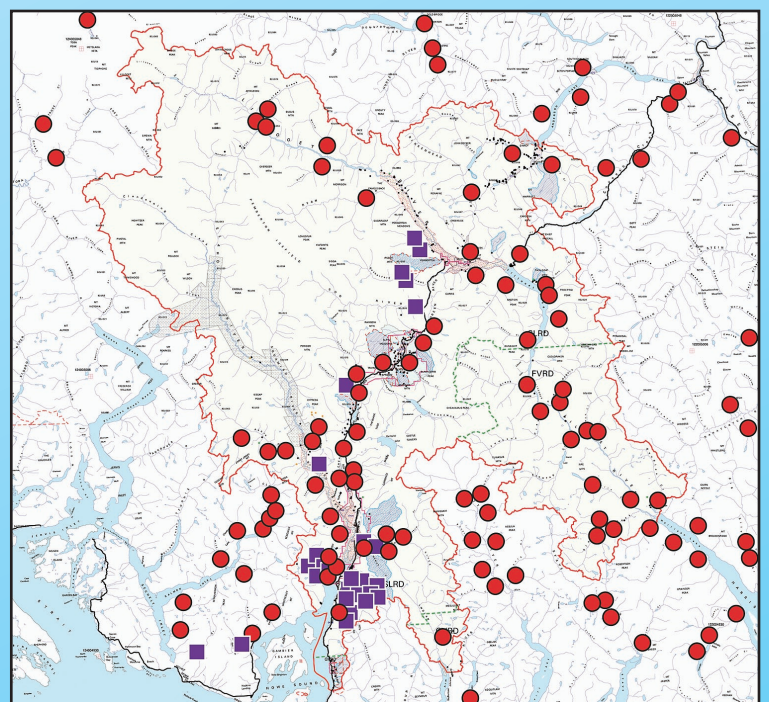
- ☐ I have done something to claim and save our waterpowered energy systems for future generations.

The provincial government and perhaps even the Crown corporations may deny these facts. The public must stop the process; allow no more purchase contracts through BCUC in order to gain control of the situation. A solution to arrest continued public harm must be found. Our energy sources must be protected, starting with our water resources.

A public debate would seem a sensible thing to do. Local governments are the closest responsible political representatives of the population. Most of them, like you, are largely unaware of these facts. They will need your support as you will need theirs. All of the local governments of British Columbia will meet in Victoria from October 23 to October 25 at their annual general meeting. The premier will address the convention at 10am on the 25th.

The course of action to reclaim BC Hydro is to cancel the BC Hydro-Accenture outsourcing agreement. Cancel the incorporation of BC Transmission Corporation, the Crown corporation set up to facilitate a deregulated electricity market. Cancel all undeveloped water licences. Do not issue any more purchase agreements and cancel the recent call for purchase before any of those private companies incur costs. Buy out the dozen or so run of river projects built in the last few years. Allow BC Hydro to generate power on behalf of its owners, the citizens of British Columbia.

For further details see www.hydrofactsbc.ca
Chinese, Punjabi and Persian versions online.
BC Hydro: Our Tower of Power by Austin Boyd



Whistler area (SLRD) run-of-river private power projects built in square blue and to-be-built in round red.



Calming the terror

UNIVERSE WITHIN • GWEN RANDALL-YOUNG

How can we maintain any sense of security in a world that seems increasingly unsafe? Terrorism is frightening due to its chaotic and unpredictable nature. It is one thing to feel unsafe while living in a war zone. It is another thing when the whole world becomes a war zone.

With each terrorist attack, the level of vigilance in the world increases. It is difficult to imagine ever being able to go back to a previous level. Further, the old rules for protecting ourselves – avoiding political hot spots, for example – are no longer sufficient. Terrorists are attacking innocents on their own turf.

We outgrew our childhood fears of bogeymen, those nameless, faceless, scary entities that would come out of nowhere to hurt us, only to grow up into a wilder, less civilized world, where the bogeymen are real.

Even if we ourselves are not victimized, we may be traumatized by what we see happening to others who were simply going about their daily lives. We know it could have been us. We worry that next time, or the time after, it might be us.

It would be easy to go into a place of anxiety and fear, cowering in our little corner of the world, losing the ability to be happy or experience joy. Real as the threats might be, however, we are still dealing with the issue of fear. Fear, unless we are in immanent danger, is about something we imagine may happen in the future. As we focus on the fear, we cannot remain in the moment.

We can maintain some level of peace within our own being, even as the world becomes increasingly less peaceful. It is important for us to do this, especially in times such as these. Some of us must hold that place of peace so that, energetically at least, we can offset some of the violence.

We can do this by, as much as possible, remaining in the present moment as we move through our day. Take the time to notice the people you care about, your pets and the sounds and sights of nature. Aim to be con-

SPIRITUALITY

scious of how good each moment is, savouring the peace that exists in that moment.

If possible, set aside at least half an hour to sit quietly. This can take the form of meditation, or it may simply be a time where you calm the body, quiet the mind and perhaps listen to music that is centering and relaxing. Try not to think, but rather feel deeply into that place of calm that rests always at the core of your being. Notice your breathing; follow the in-breaths and the out-breaths for a while. With each exhalation, allow yourself to go a little deeper than before.

When you reach that place of stillness and calmness, imagine you are now sending that energy out into the world, particularly to those people and geographical regions that are in turmoil. You may be but one cell in the body of humanity, but what happens in one cell can affect the whole. Yes, there is much that is fearful in our world, but holding on to fear only adds to the imbalance and negativity.

If our body is experiencing illness, it is more empowering to focus on health and vitality, than to fear all the bad things that might happen. Positive thoughts and holding images of health have a positive impact on the human immune system. Might it not then follow that if our world is out of balance, by creating peaceful energy within ourselves, and holding healing images for our wounded world, that we might strengthen the global immune system? It is worth considering, and is so much better than cowering in fear, which is exactly what the terrorists would have us do.


Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books and CDs, visit (www.gwen.ca).

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Child honouring

BY RAFFI CAVOUKIAN

We are conducting a vast toxicological experiment in which the research animals are our children. – Dr. Philip Landrigan, *Center for Children's Health and the Environment*

Across all cultures, we find an essential humanity that is most visible in early childhood – a playful, intelligent and creative way of being. Early experience lasts a lifetime. It shapes our sense of self and how we see others; it also shapes our sense of what's possible, our view of the world. The impressionable early years are the most vulnerable to family dynamics, cultural values and planetary conditions. At this critical point in the history of humankind, the irreducible needs of all children, no matter where they live, can offer a unifying ethic by which the cultures of our interdependent world might reorder their priorities.

"Child honouring" is a vision, an organizing principle and a way of life – a revolution in values that calls for a profound redesign of every sphere of society.

It starts with three givens: first, the primacy of the early years – early childhood is the gateway to humane being. Second, we face planetary degradation unprecedented in scope and

scale, a state of emergency that most endangers the very young, and that requires a remedy of equal scale. And third, the crisis calls for a *systemic* response in detoxifying the environments that make up the ecology of the child.

In this way, child honouring is a "children first" approach to healing communities and restoring ecosystems; it views how we regard and treat our young as the key to building a humane and sustainable world. (It's not about a child-centred society where children rule, or a facile notion of children being all things nice, and it has nothing to do with permissive parenting.) It is a global credo for maximizing joy and reducing suffering by respecting the goodness of every human being at the beginning of life, with benefits rippling in all directions.

It's a novel idea, that of organizing society around the needs of its youngest members. Just as startling is the finding of neuroscience that a lifetime of behaviours is largely shaped by the age of four, and that, developmentally speaking, the preschool years are more important than the school years. In the words of the

Council on Human Development (Greenspan, Shanker), "Early childhood is the most important time in a human being's development."

What does it mean to honour children? It means seeing them for the creatively intelligent people they are, respecting their personhood as their own, recognizing them as essential members of the community and providing the fundamental nurturance they need in order to flourish. Child honouring connects the dots between the personal, cultural and planetary factors that affect formative growth, and asserts that sustainability strategies must take into account all three domains.

Children are not a partisan concern, and child honouring is not pitted against person or ideology. Its allegiance is to children and to their families. It speaks emphatically of the birthright of children of every culture for love, dignity and security. At the same time, it encompasses the whole of life. The focus on early life simply underscores a key tenet: the primacy of the early years.

Child honouring ultimately means living in reverence with the mystery of Creation. In our quantum universe where everything is interrelated, the child is a "holon," something which is both whole and a part of something bigger. Just as in quantum physics observation affects outcome, so too in human relations; with respect to the very young, regard shapes development. How we regard a child is the vital mirror with which that child's innate potential comes alive.

Children who feel seen, loved and honoured are far more able to become loving parents and productive citizens later on. Children who do not feel valued are inordinately represented on welfare rolls and police records. Much of the criminal justice system deals with the results of childhood wounding – the vast majority of sexual offenders were themselves violated as children – and much of the social service sector represents an attempt to rectify or moderate this damage which comes at an enormous cost to society. Most of it is too little, too late.

Child honouring is a corrective

lens that, once we look through it, allows us to question everything from the way we measure economic progress to our stewardship of the planet; from our physical treatment of children to the corporate impact on their minds and bodies; from unthinking consumerism to factory schooling. It offers a proactive developmental approach to creating sustainable societies. As a creed that crosses all faiths and cultures, child honouring can become a potent remedy for the most challenging issues of our time.

The essence of the vision is expressed in *A Covenant for Honouring Children* and its underlying principles. The approach is precautionary: "First do no harm," the physicians' oath, can become a non-violent mantra for all of society. The spirit is invitational, a call to imagine and create a diversity of child-friendly cultures.

The child-honouring society I imagine would show love for its children in every facet of its design and organization. It would uphold the basic human rights of every child.

Corporal punishment would be a thing of the past. No child would live in neglect or lack access to health care. Kids wouldn't be alone after school with violent computer games, eating junk food, waiting for a parent to get home. You'd see family support centres in every neighbourhood. Working with the young would be valued and well rewarded. Universally available childcare centres would be staffed by trained professionals. We'd have more schools and teachers, smaller class sizes and a range of learning options for families to choose from. We'd teach child development as a primary subject as fundamental as reading, writing and arithmetic; children would learn about the importance of empathy and the basics of nurturant parenting.

A child-honouring world would honour the central place of women in life and have a proportionate share of women in decision-making roles. Women would become patrons and architects of sustainable design. "Mother's milk legislation" would detoxify the chemical industry. We'd breathe better thanks to strict clean air laws. Ecological economics would



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accelerate a full-fledged renaissance in business. We'd have a triple bottom line economy in which social and environmental costs are factored into the full cost of doing business; a "quality of life index" that measures what matters most: subsidy and tax shifts towards clean energies, sustainable practices, innovative enterprise and a political cycle not geared primarily towards re-election. We'd have a culture that rewards elected representatives for long-term wisdom rather than short-term power.

To address the dramatic rise in children's asthma and the body burden of toxic compounds now in blood and in breast milk, a "child-friendly protocol for commerce" worldwide would breathe new life into public health. Organic farmers would play a leading role in protecting the world's food security. Engineers would compete for the most benign industrial compounds and manufacturing processes. Corporate charter reforms would herald a new dawn of responsible commerce in which CEOs and shareholders would be truly accountable to the public good. Released from the Midas curse, we could be free to work towards our highest aspirations. Humanity must choose its future in a race against time.

Urgently, we need to create a culture of deep compassion in which the primacy of the early years guides public policy, in which the admired life blends material sufficiency with

more noble aims. One in which our children pledge allegiance to Mother Earth and learn to become responsible global citizens. In which corporate ingenuity is redirected to profit all shareholders of our planet. In which "the good life" and "living large" speak not to our purchasing power, but to the quality of our existence: our relationships with one another and with nature. In which our economy, as a subset of nature, becomes a means to this end, not an end in itself. A culture that puts self-confidence ahead of consumer confidence. One that supports the emotional intelligence of its young.

The compassionate revolution needs you: parents and educators, CEOs and policy makers, grandparents and youth, social justice activists and environmentalists, NGOs and health professionals, scientists and faith leaders. Take an oath to live by child honouring principles in your own life, and to infuse them in our institutions. Let the transformative power of child honouring strengthen the global civil society. Join the wave to restore our children's stolen future, to make this the world of their dreams as well as ours. "We must turn this world around," Nelson Mandela said, "for the children." We have that power.

Raffi Cavoukian CM, OBC, is a children's troubadour, author and ecology advocate and president of Troubadour Music, Inc.

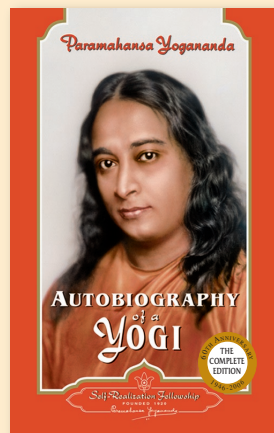
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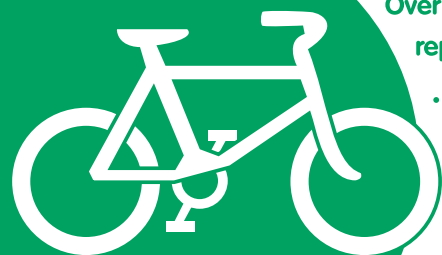
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Why save seeds?

ON THE GARDEN PATH • CAROLYN HERRIOT

ORGANICS

There are many benefits to saving your own seeds. One is that you are collecting seeds from plants that have adapted to the specific growing conditions in your garden. Another is that you can choose the healthiest plants and select for the traits you want, such as high yields, large fruit, early ripening, great fragrance or wonderful flavour.

By saving your own seeds, you know you are starting with the freshest seeds with the highest germination rate – the best start a plant can hope for. You can also grow plants that may not be commercially available, such as hollyhocks that have been growing in your grandmother's garden for 50 years.

Instead of paying a lot for a little pinch of seeds, you will have containers full of them for free to share with family and friends. Best of all, you can barter your precious seeds at a community seed show, such as Seedy Saturday, and exchange them for specialty seeds collected by other gardeners.

Most importantly, by saving seeds you are empowering yourself to look out for your future security. In these times of climate change, threats of war and rapid population increase, who knows what's going to happen to the global food supply? It's reassuring to know that you can collect the seeds you'll need to grow your own food.

Saving seeds successfully

As a seed saver, you participate in the selection process to encourage those qualities in a plant you most value. Choose flowers for beauty, colour or fragrance. For vegetables, traits such as early ripening, disease resistance, high yields, size and good flavour are all important. Of course, it always makes sense to select seeds from the healthiest and best-performing plants in the garden. These seeds will grow plants displaying the greatest vigour.

Here are a few basics about saving seeds:

1) Choose open-pollinated rather than hybrid seeds to guarantee that you get the same plant year after

year. Hybrids result from crossing two distantly related parent plants. If you save seeds of hybrids, the plants will not grow true in the next generation. The resulting plant may revert to characteristics from one or the other of the parent plants or display an undesirable mix of both. Species of plants that have not been hybridized will reproduce to the original plant. Open-pollinated vegetables will grow into the same vegetable as

By saving seeds you are empowering yourself to look out for your future security. In these times of climate change, threats of war and rapid population increase, who knows what's going to happen to the global food supply?

the parent plant as long as cross-pollination with a different variety of the same species has not occurred.

2) Determine whether plants are self-pollinating or cross-pollinating: Plants such as tomatoes, peppers, beans, lettuce and peas have "perfect flowers," which means their flowers hold both male and female parts so they can be

pollinated without the assistance of bees, insects or the wind to carry the pollen. This allows the gardener to grow different varieties in close proximity to one another.

3) Use isolation distances to be sure accidental crossing does not occur: Different tomato varieties should be separated by a distance of six feet (30 feet if they are heritage potato-leaf varieties). Different varieties of lettuce should be 10 feet apart. Bush beans need to be separated by 10 feet, and pole beans by 30 feet. These are all self-pollinating vegetables.

Many plants, such as squash, have "imperfect flowers," which means each plant has separate male and female flowers. In this case, the gardener must take further isolation distances into account when planting. Squash needs to be isolated by a quarter of a mile to prevent insects spreading pollen from the male flowers of one variety to the female flowers of another variety. If you've ever had an unidentified squash volunteer in your garden, it was the result of cross pollination between varieties of squash grown there the previous year.

Biennial crops, such as beets, car-

continued on p.42

The US vs. John Lennon

FILMS WORTH WATCHING • ROBERT ALSTEAD

CULTURE



John Lennon and Yoko Ono, in an image from *The US vs. John Lennon*
Photo: Barrie Wentzell

John Lennon would have been 66 this year if he hadn't been shot in 1980. As Yoko Ono points out in *The US vs. John Lennon*, a new feature documentary on Lennon's years as a prominent anti-war activist, his memory lives on. (No release date was set at the time of writing, but it is expected to be out in Vancouver in mid-October.)

A slick composite of archived public appearances and interviews with Lennon and Ono, intermingled with current interviews with aging figures from the Vietnam era, this doc pretty much captures Lennon, (as well as any film could) as the iconic symbol of peace and love. That's both its strength and its weakness, however. While iconoclasts will roll their eyes at its cozy, rose-tinted nostalgia, others will lap up the feel-good, idealistic vibe.

The film catches up with Lennon as he is drifting away from the Beatles and beginning to use his celebrityhood and that cocky Liverpoolian wit to raise awareness about the wrongness of the war in Vietnam. There are the Bed-ins for peace and the first recording of anti-war anthem *Give Peace a Chance* in Montreal. We also see half a million demonstrators singing *Give Peace a Chance* in Washington DC, as well as concerts and interviews.

As he became more involved, hanging with what the government considered dangerous political activists in New York, such as Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin and Black Panther leader Bobby Seale, it becomes more

sinister. We learn from apparently remorseful former CIA agents how they spied on Lennon and tapped his phones. (And they said he was being paranoid.) With Lennon's own songs providing a constant soundtrack to his life, the story then details how the Nixon government, fearing Lennon's influence during the 1972 election campaign, snarled both himself and Ono in a protracted deportation battle.

Would John have approved of the way his celebrityhood is used here? He'd probably be disappointed at the lack of bite. There's something a bit too packaged about this film. Even though Gore Vidal draws a parallel between Nixon and the current US regime in blunt terms, *The US vs. John Lennon* has a safe, retrospective glow. It's uplifting and occasionally funny, but it also feels mellowed by history.

The Vancouver International Film Festival runs until October 13 at various venues around town. One film that really shook me up was documentary feature *Uganda Rising*. Made by local directors Jesse James Miller and Pete McCormack, it is unrelentingly gory in its depiction of the horrors and brutality arising from the guerrilla conflict in North Uganda since 1986. Through interviews with victims, peace-brokers and former child abductees of the shadowy Lord's Resistance Army, we learn how children were forced to butcher even their own family members as part of their "training."

Narrated with a news-style

voiceover, the doc leaves no doubt about the physical and psychological suffering the Acholi people have endured, yet, as the camera follows school children in one of the sprawling, muddy camps, it also shows that, in spite of everything, there is still hope. Although the film begins to connect the dots between Western exploitation in the region and the conflict, it does not provide enough details. It ends on an ambivalent note,



National Guard soldiers face off with protesters, in an image from *The US vs. John Lennon*. Photo: AP/Wide World Photos

suggesting that while reconciliation and the pardoning of former LRA members has helped heal wounds, recovery for the Acholi people is still desperately fragile. (October 10, 3:45pm, Vancity Theatre; October 11, 7pm, Ridge Theatre.)

On a brighter note, *Buddha's Lost*

Children shows how Khru Bah, a Thai kickboxing champion turned monk, has become an unorthodox father figure for many orphaned or impoverished children from villages in rural Thailand. Filmed over the course of a year, fly-on-the-wall style, it reveals that although some of Khru Bah's physical childrearing methods may seem questionable, he clearly has won the affection and respect of the villagers and his children.

The mountainous setting for the monastery, with its stables of ponies and lush landscape, and a long trek made by the new boys, or "novices," is evocatively shot, but the film could have been more circumspect. For example, Khru Bah's training as a monk is skimmed over and there's little sign of any drugs that we are repeatedly told are such a prevalent problem in the region. (October 8: Empire Granville 7, 10am; October 9: 6:40pm; October 13: 11:30am.)

Milarepa is the first of a two-part feature from *The Cup's* Neten Chokling, a lama in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Milarepa was a 12th century saint, who, as the story goes, learned sorcery as a young man to avenge his wronged family. Unfortunately, this fable is poorly adapted for the screen as a two-dimensional plod with a confusing moral message. Spreading the story thin over two films – the next installment is due next year – doesn't help either. That said, the Himalayan landscape is

breathhtakingly shot. You could watch it for that alone. (October 8: Empire Granville 7, 7pm; October 9, 1pm.)

Robert Alstead is making a documentary about Vancouver's Critical Mass entitled *You Never Bike Alone* (www.youneverbikealone.com).

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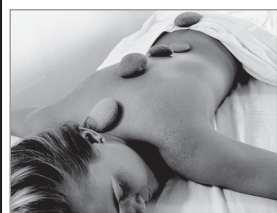
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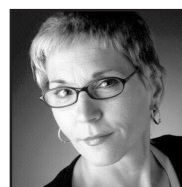
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On Track Zodiac

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ARIES (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

A new phase begins in which your intuition plays a big part. The stage is set for you to delve deeply into your feelings. This is a great time to break down the walls of deception within and build a foundation of personal trust. Making amends with yourself is the beginning.



TAURUS (Apr 20 – May 21)

This time of apathy and boredom won't last forever. One of the best ways to de-stress is to make scrunched-up faces and then relax your facial muscles. You might choose to lose a gloomy attitude and those ridiculous faces will work wonders in your anti-aging program. Plough through regardless of obstacles.



GEMINI (May 22 – Jun 20)

Your independence is stimulated when you are applauded for it. A revival of your self-acceptance and confidence will prove that you are able to go solo in your career endeavours. Ideas are conceived if you stay open to the diversity of your talents.



CANCER (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

You may desire a more traditional correspondence with your friends and loved ones. Duets, sonnets, poems and music will soothe as you let those close to you know you care. A sentimentalist at heart, you experience a strumming of your heartstrings.



LEO (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

You could witness the blues parading through your mind. A sensitive nature that you have perhaps hidden now rears its lovely head. If you allow your emotions to flow, rather than fighting them, you could gain immense insights and perhaps transform the dynamic of your psyche.



VIRGO (Aug 23 – Sep 22)

To realize your dreams is one thing; to carry out a direction is quite another. If you find yourself in overwhelming situations where you can't get a grip on reality, it could be that you need to take some major time out. Try doing less mental planning to lift the complexity in your life. Ease on down the road with simple ideas.



LIBRA (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

You could be looking deeper than usual into that crystal ball. Your soul-searching nature has woken up along with a craving to recharge your batteries. Meditation holds a new glimmer of hope and you silently create a source for contemplation. Illumination is a breath away.



SCORPIO (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

You seem to want to cut out all the platitudes in conversations and become more provocative with the truth. Agility shows in both your speech and your actions. Utilize the timing of the trend now to cut to the chase and realize some profound methods. Endorse your authenticity.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

You discovered the culprits to ill health and the road now leads to balance. Perhaps you had a wake-up call and your desire to be healthy out-weighed your appetite for the extremes. Seek out new adventures and favourable conditions in which to flourish.



CAPRICORN (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

You may be less willing to desert your post when it comes to serving the needs of others. You discover stumbling blocks to getting your needs met, but you carry on, even at the cost of your personal agenda. You are able to do a lot more with less effort. Seize the day.



AQUARIUS (Jan 20 – Feb 19)

For some, there will be unexpected surprises in the area of relationship; for others, a day-to-day routine may be the norm. The paradox of life is becoming more apparent so you can't really make any hard and fast rules. There is room for improvement no matter what your circumstances.



PISCES (Feb 20 – Mar 20)

The desire to mingle with others is strong. Even the most commonplace events will hold a joyful surprise or two. Sharing stories and opening fresh chapters with strangers will entice you to speak freely and could lead to some lasting friendships.

Ilona Hedi Granik is a clairvoyant consultant and author with 31 years of experience in astrology, multi-media art and healing. (iamilona@gmail.com) (www.HeartLightCentre.com).

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fying importance of another order of reality.

I believe that the time has come for all of us to examine the conclusions that our authors reached, and to come to an understanding of how we can help to effect societal change by changing our own individual outlook. (Books available on the market or at libraries.)


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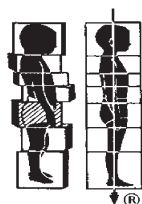


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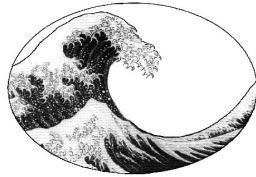
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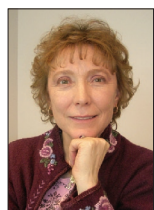


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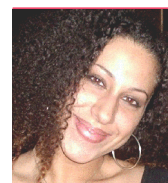
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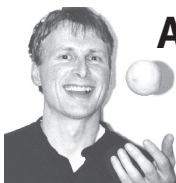
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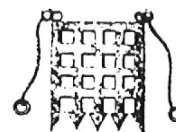
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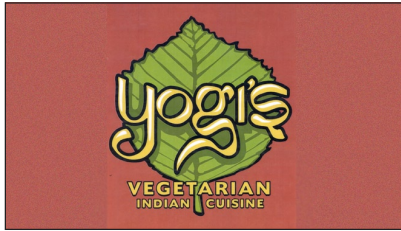
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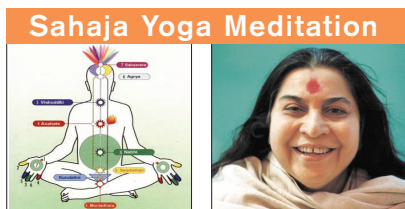
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OCT 15
Mountain Taoism Sundo Workshop presented by Master Hyunmoon Kim: Taoist Yoga and Breathing Meditation for health, longevity and spiritual realization. \$25, 4-6pm, The Sanctuary, 5475 Dunbar, 604-732-9389.

OCT 15
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Bringing Meditation to Life: Weave Meditation into your daily schedule. Learn proven strategies that give you the peace you are looking for. (www.vancouverbuddhistcentre.com) 604-261-9792.

OCT 22
Experience a Body Talk Energy Session with certified practitioners! \$20 donation. All net proceeds to charity. BodyTalk Vancouver monthly Community Clinic downtown Vancouver. See ad below. Sunday, 11am-4pm By appointment only. 778-389-7909 (info@bodytalkvancouver.com).

OCT 24
Organic & Natural Living Seminar *Alf Orpen of ONEGroup (former director of Biological Farmers of Australia) speaks on Sustainable Living Practices 7pm, Holiday Inn Metrotown. Min \$2 donation to EarthsaveCanada. Register 604-599-1977, (info@myorganicfamily.com)

OCT 26-29
World Premiere: The Temptation of Buddha choreographed by Jai Govinda. An ancient tale told through Indian classical dance. Roundhouse Community Centre, 181 Roundhouse Mews, 8pm or 2pm Sunday matinee. \$22/\$18 students & seniors, 604-231-7535 or (www.ticketstonight.ca) (www.mandalarts.ca).

OCT 27
The Zen of Neurofeedback: Lecture by Dr. Valdeane Brown PhD, 6pm, Port Moody Inlet Theatre, 100 Newport Drive, Port Moody. Tickets \$15 + GST, 604-936-0888.

OCT 27
Buddhist Wisdom Master Maticintin introduces Secrets of the Golden Spiral: Handbook for Enlightenment: Free event sponsored by Banyen Books, 7:30 pm, Vancouver Public Library, 604-505-5440.

OCT 27-29
Grandmaster Dr. Effie Poy Yew Chow: Qigong Healing Event: Dr. Chow is renowned for helping people with cancer, stroke, depression, multiple sclerosis, brain injury & many more conditions, Full program, \$300. Fri 7-9:30pm \$25. Sat & Sun 9am-4pm,

\$175/day. Call 604-535-6603 for tickets or (www.EmergingPathway.ca). See display ad this issue.

OCT 27-29
Electromagnetic Fields Workshop: Identify and solve electromagnetic field problems; bioeffects, symptoms. Certificate. For professionals and laypersons. Outline at (www.essentia.ca). (888) 639-7730. Attractive early registration discounts.

OCT 28
Parade of Lost Souls: Produced by Public Dreams Society, this year's theme is Peeking Through the Veil. 6-10pm, Grandview Park (Commercial Drive at Charles Street). (www.publicdreams.org).

OCT 28-29
Vancouver Health Show at Canada Place under the sails. Over 200 exhibits, 800 experts, fitness demos, bodyworkers, anti-aging. Keynote presentation Dr. Art Hister, Sat 1:30pm. Show hours- Sat: 10am-6pm, Sun: 11am-5:30pm. Tickets at door: \$10/\$8 seniors. Info at (www.healthshows.com).

OCT 29
Kundalini Management: Co-operate safely with Kundalini power through Taoist energy circulation. Minke, 2-5 pm, The Space, #305-1008 Homer St., \$50, 604-669-2505 (www.silentground.com).

OCT 29
Wiccan Samhain Ritual & Spiral Dance: Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph St. Doors open 6:15pm, Ritual starts 7pm. Tickets \$10-\$20. Info: (www.samhainvancouver.org).

NOV 3-5
Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Course. Intro \$10, Course \$295, Pacific Institute of Reflexology, 604-875-8818.

NOV 9
The Marketing Dialogues: A Series of Dialogues to Help Healing Professionals and Counsellors Attract More Clients. \$39 Early Bird; \$45 Regular, 7-9:30pm, (www.julietaustin.com/dialogues.html).

NOV 9-11
Spirituality and Health - The 4th International Multidisciplinary Conference hosted by UBC Interprofessional Continuing Education, at the Westin

Bayshore. Call 604-822-0054 or 877-328-7744, (ipad@interchange.ubc.ca) (www.interprofessional.ubc.ca). See display ad this issue.

NOV 18
Paint from the soul to expand the heart Workshop: Create beautiful paintings from your inner vision. No experience necessary. Painting, printing, collage. Supplies provided. Anita Nairne, 604-684-6418, (anitanairne@telus.net) (www.anitanairne.com).

SATURDAYS

Holistic Healing Fair: Third Saturday of every month. AWAKENING HEART-15177 Russell Ave-White Rock. 10-4pm. Free Admission. 604-535-6603 or (www.emergingpathway.ca).

SUNDAYS

The Centre for Spiritual Living uniting the world in love. Inspired by the teachings of Deepak Chopra and Louise Hay? You'll love our Sunday services, 11 AM. Children welcome. 1495 W. 8th Ave., Vancouver, 604-321-1225 (www.cslvancouver.com).

International Spiritualist Alliance: #201-317 Columbia Street, New West, 604-521-6336. Sunday services, 11am. Rev. Joyce Tarvin, 604-433-6663. See Resource Directory (www.isacanada.ca).

MONDAYS

Free, anonymous, telephone support line offering guided meditations for people suffering from chronic pain. Non-religious. Counselors have community crisis line training. Mondays 7pm-11pm, 604-936-5683.

TUESDAYS

Pranic Healing Clinics: Non-touch energy healing. By donation. Tuesdays 11am-3pm and 6pm-9pm. 2950 Laurel St, Vancouver. Closed last Tuesday of month (www.pranichealing.ca/vancouver).

Reflexology Student Clinic sessions, only \$18. Evenings only. By appointment. Pacific Institute of Reflexology. 604-875-8818.

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EVENTS

OCT 24: ORGANIC & NATURAL LIVING SEMINAR Alf Orpen of ONEGroup speaks on Sustainable Living Practices-former director of Biological Farmers of Australia. 7pm Holiday Inn Metrotown. Min \$2 donation to EarthsaveCanada. Register 604-599-1977, (info@myorganicfamily.com).

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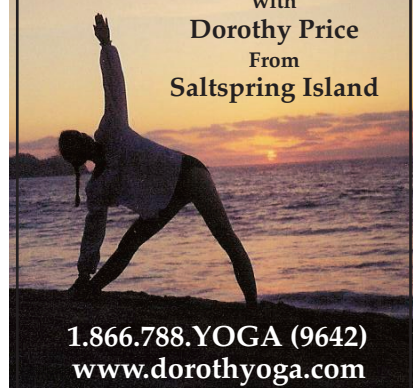
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rots and cabbages, produce their edible crop in the first year and set seed the following season. These crops need isolation distances of a quarter of a mile to prevent cross-pollination, as do brassicas such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, collards, kale and kohlrabi. Get to know your isolation distances for saving vegetable seeds or you will be harvesting a future crop of mutant veggies.

4) Collect seeds before they disperse naturally: The timing for seed collection is critical; observation is the key to success. Wait until the seed is ripe enough for collection, but don't wait until the seeds have scattered all over the garden or the birds have swooped in and eaten them.

5) Label seeds: If you've ever found an envelope of seeds and wondered what they were or how old they were, you will know how important labeling is. For everything you collect, identify the species and variety, record any special features and record data, such as the place and date the seeds were collected.

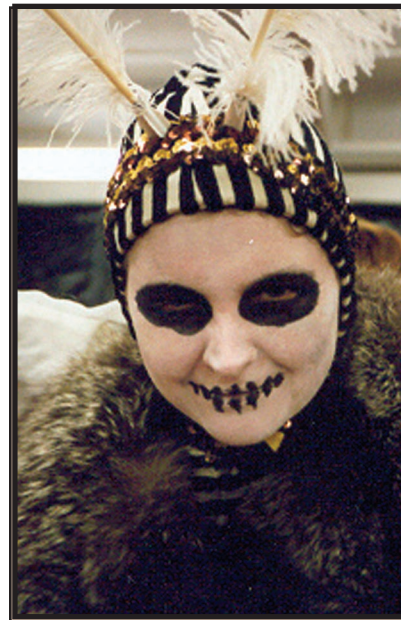
6) Dry seeds thoroughly: I'll never forget my friend's dismay at discovering her container of precious hollyhock seeds had gone mouldy. Drying seeds thoroughly is critical before storing them in sealed containers or envelopes. The larger the seeds, the longer they need to dry properly. I spread mine out on ceramic plates and let them dry in a warm area away from direct sunlight. I allow two weeks or more for drying.

7) Clean seeds before storing: Remove the chaff and other debris by sieving seeds through screens of different sized mesh. Winnow seeds in a light breeze to remove any tiny particles, weed seeds or dust. I use a hair-dryer on a low, cold setting for this. Tomatoes are cleaned by a wet process, where they undergo a fermentation process for a few days, which also eliminates seed-borne pathogens. Melons, squashes, cucumbers and tomatillos are also cleaned using water, allowing dead seeds to float to the surface and good seeds to sink to the bottom.

Store seeds in a cool dark area, away from fluctuations in light and moisture: The ideal temperature for storage is 55°F (13° C). Paper envelopes or airtight containers, such as yogurt tubs, work fine for seed storage. Keeping seeds in an airtight, waterproof container in the fridge prolongs seed life – longer if you freeze them.

This may sound like a lot of preparation, but you will discover that saving seeds is relatively straightforward. The satisfaction of taking out containers of your own seeds in spring to begin a new cycle of growth will more than compensate for your efforts the previous year.

From A Year on the Garden Path: A 52-Week Organic Gardening Guide by Carolyn Herriot. \$29.95, Earthfuture Publications, Victoria, BC. Available at Banyen Books, Duthie Books or at (www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath).



Parade of the Lost Soul Returns

The event takes place Saturday October 28, 6-10pm, beginning at the all-weather field at William and Cotton streets and continuing in Grandview Park. Please call 604-879-8611 or visit (www.publicdreams.org).

Olson cont. from p.7

ern mysticism in the film, the world-weary character goes with the flow, in the true Taoist sense. (Taoists call it the "watercourse way." You learn to not fight perpetually against the fluid dynamics of the natural order, but to use it to your advantage.) In other words, Phil learns to do the very opposite of what many of us do in our daily lives, and what many of our leaders do in our name.

The problem with Bill Murray's character comes down to control issues. You could say that this is also the fundamental human problem with war, whether it's war on nature, or war on each other. Not that the latter is ever an easy sell. It takes some doing to convince educated people to kill other educated people on a mass scale, considering the natural human desire for self-preservation. Hence the recourse to air wars. In the words of US marine Anthony Swaford: "If wars were only fought by the men on the ground, the men facing one another in real battle, most wars would end quickly and sensibly. Men are smart and men are animals, in the sense that they don't want to die so simply for so little."

Smart, but not quite smart enough. Over and over again throughout history, the powers that believe have used the fig leaf of organized religion and fear of the faithless to conceal grabs for real estate. Isn't it wondrously strange that the Creator promised the same patch of land to people of different faiths? And doesn't He move in mysterious ways, putting so much of the oil, gold, silver, uranium, gallium, molybdenum, etc., under the dusty feet of poor people in distant lands?

One definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over again, expecting different results. In terms of the planet's population, a great number of people do not wish to keep pursuing our insane *Groundhog Day* schemes of military command and control, but those who do are sit-

ting behind the big desks and taking the important calls. While there are greater numbers of people around the world clamouring for peace, their calls usually don't get through.

But even more sobering, there are millions upon millions more with an unquestioning dependency on the status quo: the two cars, the commute, the mortgage and the nights relaxing in front of the tube. The lifestyles in the West, and increasingly the East, are inextricably bound to global campaigns, ensuring an uninterrupted supply of fossil fuel and other resources. You and I and everyone else are heading towards the cliff, like Phil and his kidnapped groundhog. It will take much more than a Sonny and Cher song to wake us up.

Groundhog Day is a multidimensional film with many interpretations, most of them hopeful. Phil is not just a helpless victim; by responding differently each day to the people he meets, and by travelling down different routes at differing times, he becomes an active participant in reality's outcome. Each differing choice results in a different fate, not just for himself, but for others as well. You could convincingly argue that this actually happens in real life. A fork in the road presents different options. Each takes you down a different path with unpredictable results, not just for you, but for those you meet. For good or ill, every one of us is in the reality-construction game.

We cannot predict the outcome of things, even within the small circle of our own lives. But for all our ignorance, we still have free will. We have it within ourselves to choose to remain safely within the holes we've dug for ourselves, cursing the darkness. Down below, there's no chance that we'll see our own shadow. But there's also no chance of standing together and at last seeing the light.

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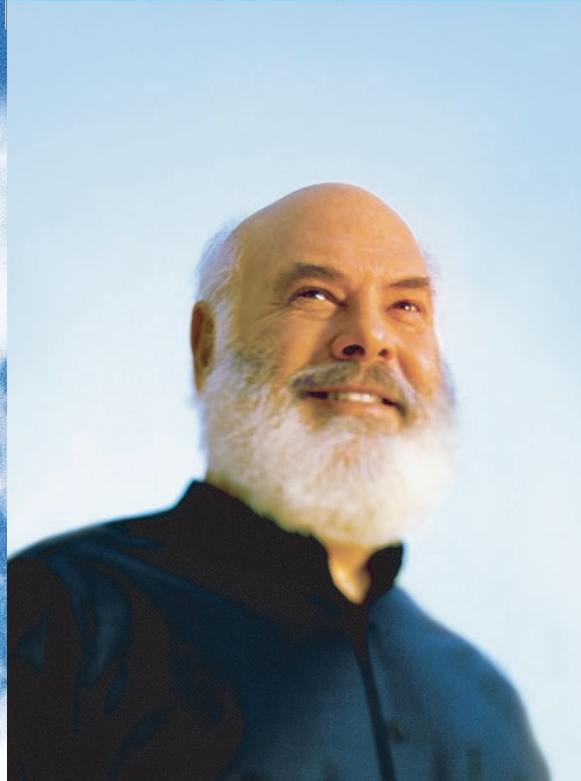
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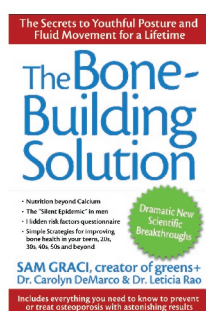
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